



July 16, 2014

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FSA SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

USDAConnect – <https://connections.usda.gov/>

NASE strives to:

- promote the betterment of the Farm Service Agency through improved service to the public
- Improve our programs
- Establish a cooperative relationship at all levels of the Agency
- Help accomplish the mission of USDA and FSA
- Improve support staff effectiveness
- Improve morale, esprit-de-corps, and efficiency
- Promote self-motivation, self-education, and career enhancement
- Promote the social, economic, civic and personal welfare of support employees



Wear **red** on Fridays to show support for our troops at home and abroad.

## MESSAGE FROM PAST PRESIDENT,

I want to thank all of the NASE members that have supported me the last two years that I have been President. My decision to not serve another year is because of health problems that I have had since I began as president in 2012.

Not being able to travel has limited my involvement in FSA activities and I feel that our current NASE board is doing a great job with the meetings they have had with National and Finance Office officials as well as attending Zone and National conventions.

NASE is fortunate to have people that listen to us and value our input. This year the budget has allowed our board to travel to Washington DC and we hope that it will continue in the coming fiscal years.

I want to encourage all support employees to become involved with NASE or any other union or employee organization. You can participate at your own comfort level, but you should know that any time that you give is important and very much appreciated. The people that you will meet and the opportunities that can open up for your career are invaluable.

Marilyn McMullen, Montana will be an excellent president. Marilyn has had FSA experience at all levels; she knows people and how to get the job done. All of the other board members have the enthusiasm and experience to make NASE a fine and useful organization for FSA.

**Best wishes for the future of NASE,**

**Cindy Porter, NASE Past President  
Nebraska**

## 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION – ROSEMONT, IL

June 29 – July 2, 2014

### Excerpts from President's Report by Cindy Porter

This year in FSA has been the most interesting year in my 27 years as a government employee. We started our NASE year in July 2013 with continued budget and funding woes. There was talk of buy-outs, more cuts to FTE's, sequester and a possible government shutdown. Well the government shutdown did happen at the start of the Fiscal Year and I know I speak for all of you when I say that this had to be the most frustrating days of my career.

Now the future of FSA is looking much better this FY and the next year. We have funding for our FO and OL loan programs and with the new Farm Bill, states are able to hire temporary employees to help with the work.

NASE also has a bright future. We have new employees stepping forward to serve as officers and on committees. For the first time in a couple of years the National Office has paid the expenses for association members to travel to Washington DC. Our group was in DC the week of June 2, 2014 and we were able to send the board members as well as the chairpersons of three committees.

There are more and more task forces going on and there is always a request for NASE employees to serve on the task forces. What I really appreciate is that we never have a lack of people willing to volunteer.

We have also strengthened our relationship with Kansas City and St. Louis. When the Zone B meeting was held in KC in February we were able to have the IT Committee meet with some of the KC Beacon Facility employees.

I can't thank all of you smart, energetic and talented members enough for your input on resolutions and ideas on how NASE can build partnerships with various other FSA divisions.

A few good years doesn't mean we can slow down. NASE will continue to need to be in contact with the National Office and Kansas City. There are many new and positive projects that we will see in the next few years and NASE will stay involved in providing our input.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President for 2013-2014.

## 2014-2015 NASE Board

## A funny thing happened on the way . . . .

**Marilyn McMullen**  
Montana  
President

**Angela Biester**  
Nebraska  
Vice-President

**Heather Culwell**  
Kansas  
Secretary

**Rhonda Hoffman**  
Nebraska  
Treasurer

**Cindy Porter**  
Nebraska  
Past President

--\*--

**Jill Monson**  
California  
Zone A Representative

**Teresa DeLaCruz**  
Texas  
Zone B Representative

**Barb Painter**  
Illinois  
Zone C Representative

**Beth Perkins**  
Louisiana  
Zone D Representative

--\*--

**Cathy Rakes**  
Nebraska  
Farm Loan Committee

**Jill Uffelman**  
Montana  
Farm Program Committee

**Tanya McIlravey**  
South Dakota  
Information Technology  
Committee

There used to be a story that started like that. Now it is my story. A couple of years ago several of the current board members talked me into joining the board. I wasn't sure I wanted to be **that** involved but no one else seemed to want to step up. Now here I am, the NASE president, still wondering what I got myself into.

My mind quickly turns to respond to the question though - I am at the front of the line in an organization that believes in giving their ALL to the agency they work for. I have believed in that philosophy for years, giving it my ALL. I've belonged to NASE for years, I supported NASE (NACOAC) even when I wasn't a member because I believe in their mission. I am humbled by the thoughts that you have entrusted our great organization into my care and thankful that I have such great support in the other board members elected to serve with me.

A tiny bit about me – I am currently a farm loan specialist in the Montana state office. I started in Farmers Home Administration in southeastern Montana in 1977 (that is not a typo, yes 1977). I was a county office clerk, county office assistant, state office clerk, state office assistant, state office technician, farm loan officer trainee, farm loan specialist and a senior loan officer before that.

One of my goals in life, both career and personal, has been to live up to the Martin Luther King statement – “*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*” What we do in FSA matters and how we do it matters. Therefore, I believe that we should speak out, speak up, about it and try to make it BETTER. We also need to be able to do it professionally, courteously, and knowledgeably. I find myself on a rant sometimes but know that it is not the rant that is going to make it better. I also know that people pay more attention to areas of concern (problems) when they are accompanied by recommended solutions. Our resolutions process does this. That I will talk more about another time though.

Let's start with weekly updates. I don't know that I will be all that good at getting them out weekly. If I do they will not be as long or as detailed as they have been in the past. I would like for you, the NASE members, to let me know the kinds of things you would like to see in them. While you may not have any great ideas come to mind right now, if you see something that you like or don't like for that matter, let me know. I have already let the other board members know that they will be asked to help me with these and so I will be collecting their ideas. I would definitely like to hear yours also.

I have promised Tanya (USDA Connect ambassador) that I will get more into USDA Connect and I hope to use that as an avenue for distributing information. (Tanya, I will be calling you next week!)

We are going to work on our website (nasefsa.org). We are in definite need of some updates. Do we have any skilled website people that would like to volunteer to help? Let me know. (I am serious.)

We, the NASE board, are YOUR organization's leaders. I would ask that you play an active role in letting us know what you want us to pursue.

With my introduction over, lets get on to business. Know this, I am available! My contact information is public information. Feel free to pass it out and pass it on. You can call, text, write email or letter; I want to hear from you about your concerns and your suggestions for making FSA better and the best place to work.

Marilyn Jo McMullen  
PO Box 1774, Bozeman, MT 59771-1774  
406-599-8181 (cell)

[mjomcmullen@aol.com](mailto:mjomcmullen@aol.com) or [marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov](mailto:marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov)

## NASE in Washington DC

June 4 and 5<sup>th</sup>, the NASE executive board, zone representatives and program committee chairpersons travelled to Washington DC to meet with FSA and USDA officials. A great deal of information was received and passed on. So much so that the notes are still in the process and we will share them with you in the near future.

## NASE IN CHICAGO



Back Row: Marilyn McMullen, MT; Heather Culwell, KS; Tanya McIlravy, SD; Edna Primrose, RD DAOM; Sharon Sachs, St Louis COE; Cindy Haas, St. Louis COE; Rhonda Hoffman, NE; Angie Biester, NE; Arneither Adams, LA  
Front Row: Jill Munson, CA; Coreen Carnes, NE; Mora O'Banion, AL

## Cathy Rakes Nebraska Farm Loan Committee

### **Farm Loan Program Committee Report by Cathy Rakes, Chair**

Greetings NASE Officers and Members:

As a committee chair, this year was a whirl wind; I attended Zone B in Kansas City and also was honored to attend the meeting with the agency heads in Washington DC in June. As NASE members, we understand the importance of resolutions and how they improve our jobs.

Resolutions can be in many forms, they can be software changes, form procedure and more. There are still changes out there to be made, so keep them coming. Please poll your state members to present more resolutions/ideas in the coming year that will make a difference to our customers and our staff!

The "Farm Loan Program" committee has reviewed the FLP Resolutions submitted and have forwarded them on to be presented at NASE National Convention 2014.

## Jill Uffelman Montana Farm Program Committee

### **Farm Program Committee Report by Jill Uffelman, Chair**

The Farm Program Committee has been busy learning about the programs in FSA.

The members of the Farm Program Committee have contacted support employees to visit with them about improvements to programs, handbooks, forms, software and enhance customer service.

The DAFP has bi-weekly DAFP Teleconference calls to keep us updated. The teleconference notes are posted on the DAFP page after each call.

NASE met with the DAFP June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. The DAFP staff provided updates to their programs and we responded with questions.

We want to encourage members to take the time to complete and deliver the resolution forms and we influence others to do the same. The Resolution process is the heart and soul of NASE. We want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve on the Farm Program Committee. It is an honor and a privilege.

## **IT Committee Report by Tanya McIlravy, Chair**

In February of 2014, members of the IT committee met with personnel in KCMO and via VTC to discuss many issues. The primary purpose was to introduce NASE to the Farm Programs IT staff and market NASE as a resource for IT as well as foster two-way communication. It was extremely successful.

Items discussed that have been put on the list for implementation/investigation included:

- Add full SCIMS search to NRRS and Financial Services
- Add option to use the same ID# on receipt as remittance (i.e. check box on remittance that feeds info into/brings up receipt)
- eAuth ID's pulled out of system (personnel changes) and can't access NRRS info online to review deposit activity
- Add date range option for searching NRRS for receipts, remittances, deposits, etc.
- Update NRRS to recognize that the receipts were all FLP or all FP to allow for automated application of return check fee
- OTCnet to prefill fields and enable mouse on check scan screen

Additional items were addressed after the meeting with various IT officials because of the establishment of communication channels. These included:

- changes to DLS navigation, MIDAS search, CARS, and Managed Print Services. The IT committee along with the NASE board has been diligent in letting IT and administrative staff know that MPS is not going to be a good fit in the field for agencies with daily customer interaction. We have also engaged Chris Nelson with OSEC Administrative Solutions Project on the MPS issue, and he is working with IT and DAFO on our behalf.
- While in DC, we became aware that NACS has a member on the Change Control Board (CCB) for GLS, and we emphasized/repeated our desire to have members on that board as well as the CCB for DLS. It appears this is going to happen and will be a major step forward in having field level input into the priorities for software we use daily. We were invited to provide input into improvements to GLS and LINC, software which previously we had been told was beyond FSA control.
- USDA Connect has had a major upgrade in 2014 and another is expected in fall of 2014. These changes will further increase the applicability of Connect for use by the field. Our attempts to sway IT to use Connect for the FSA intranet have thus far been unsuccessful. While in DC we asked to be included in the planning for the new intranet, regardless of chosen platform. We feel the intranet redesign has potential to significantly impact our daily work, and we will do our best to ensure that the impact is positive rather than negative.

Other exciting changes on the horizon include:

- OTCnet is slated to be fully integrated into NRRS
- FSFL software to move to DLS
- MIDAS business partner to replace SCIMS
- EFT software to be replaced
- WebTA enhancements from NFC
- FBP server move to NITC
- Autopay for borrowers to make loan payments electronically
- Digital signatures pilot
- Electronic borrower file pilot

The partnerships and communication established and solidified this past year will improve software used daily by both FP and FLP staff around the country. We look forward to continuing to serve NASE members by striving for continuous process improvements. We encourage all members to forward questions, suggestions, and resolutions to the IT committee so we can follow up with IT staff.

**NASE partners  
with JM  
Marketing, Inc.**

JM Marketing offers a variety of benefits to NASE and NACS members. A **GUARANTEED ISSUE** lifetime benefit term with monthly long-term care benefit is being offered through **JULY 31st**. There are no health questions and coverage cannot be declined. Employees can select up to \$75,000 in coverage but if the minimum coverage amount is selected each year coverage can be increased without having to answer any health questions as long as they are still a NASE or NACS member. The policies can be setup on a Federal Allotment while working and portable in retirement.



Do I have enough protection to cover my family  
as well as my needs in my senior years?

Is it Guaranteed ?

**LifeTime Benefit Term Life Insurance with Optional Paid-Up Insurance Protection**

**Special offer for eligible Members of NACS—  
up to \$75,000 of life insurance protection on a Guaranteed Issue basis!**

**LifeTime Benefit Term is term insurance  
for a lifetime**

Life insurance provides your family with money after your death. This money will help your family meet continuing financial needs that would have been provided by your income. It can help pay a mortgage, household bills, school expenses, childcare costs or ensure that your dependents are not burdened with debt.

And, you can earn Guaranteed paid-up benefits as early as the sixth contract year, and you can even stop paying future premiums—the choice is yours.

LifeTime Benefit Term is a great way to protect your most important asset and provide peace-of-mind your family deserves.

**J. M. Marketing, Inc.**

Phone: 800/330-6223

E-mail: [info@jminsuredirect.com](mailto:info@jminsuredirect.com)

Exclusively for the Members of NACS

Underwritten by



Established 1896

**Innovation Is Our Policy®**

Fidelity Life Association,  
A Legal Reserve Life Insurance Company

Rated A- (Excellent) by A.M. Best<sup>1</sup>

[www.FidelityLife.com](http://www.FidelityLife.com)

Presented by



Protect yourself, your family and your future

## LifeTime Benefit Term insurance

For additional information please contact Ty Christenson at 800-330-6223 or [tchristenson@jminsuredirect.com](mailto:tchristenson@jminsuredirect.com)

Using the convenience of payroll deduction, we offer you and your family:

### Valuable life insurance protection through age 120!

- LifeTime Benefit Term life insurance up to \$150,000 for eligible actively at work employees.
- Life base insurance premiums are guaranteed never to increase through age 100 .
- No medical exams required. Issuance of coverage depends upon answers to a few health questions.
- Provides paid-up death benefit values after only five years, so if you decide to stop paying premiums at some time in the future, you are guaranteed paid-up coverage of a reduced amount.
- Flexible! You have the option to:
  - Continue your coverage at the same premium; or
  - Elect paid-up insurance coverage of a reduced amount after 5 years with no further premium payments—Guaranteed!
- Fully portable - you own it and take it with you when you leave your employment.
- Spouse and child coverage is available.
- Based on current interest rate assumptions the death benefit is designed to remain level through average life expectancy. In the event of a long term decline in interest rates, your coverage does contain a guarantee ensuring that the initial death benefit will last for the longer of 25 years or to age 70 and thereafter can never be less than 50% of your initial death benefit.
- **Accelerated Death Benefit for Terminal Illness<sup>†</sup>**
  - You can receive up to 50% of the death benefit (not to exceed \$100,000) if you are diagnosed as terminally ill, with the remaining death benefit being paid to your beneficiary.

### Accelerated Death Benefit for Long Term Care (LTC)<sup>†\*</sup>

- If you are certified by a physician as being both chronically ill and confined to a nursing home, home health care, assisted living, or adult day care services, you will receive 4% of your death benefit each month for up to 25 months. Benefits would begin after a 90 day elimination period has been satisfied.

### Extension of Long Term Care Benefits (EOB)<sup>†</sup>

- Extends the monthly Long Term Care benefit for up to an additional 50 months, after 100% of the base death benefit has been used for long term care.
- Insurance premiums are waived during the time this benefit is being paid.

### OPTIONAL BENEFIT RIDERS

**Dependent Child<sup>†</sup>**—Covers your dependent children for up to \$25,000.

**Accidental Death Benefit<sup>†</sup>**—Pays up to double the death benefit to your beneficiary if death results from accident.

**Guaranteed Insurability<sup>†</sup>**—Allows for scheduled automatic increases to the death benefit coverage, subject to eligibility requirements, without requiring evidence of insurability.

**Waiver of Premium<sup>†</sup>**—Waives your premium payments if you become totally disabled.

**Payor Waiver of Premium<sup>†</sup>**—Waives the premium of your spouse, if you, the payor become totally disabled.

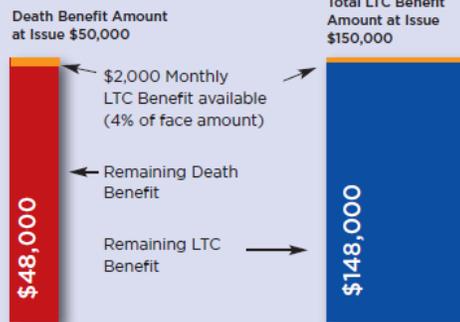
**Level Term<sup>†</sup>**—Provides additional insurance for your spouse to maximize your premium dollar.

<sup>†</sup> See contract for a complete definition of benefit eligibility. These optional benefits are available at additional costs. Long Term Care and Extension of Long Term Care Benefits premiums can increase to a guaranteed maximum. Premium increases can only occur if all contracts in a state where this benefit is issued are increased. Premiums cannot be increased solely because of an independent claim. These optional benefits are not available in all states.

\* Any accelerated death benefit received for Long Term Care or Terminal Illness will reduce by a like amount the total benefit amount available for a death benefit or any additional accelerated benefits. The maximum death benefit you may apply for with long term care benefits is \$150,000. The accelerated death benefit for a terminal illness is provided at no additional premium. A deduction is made from the remaining death benefit payable to the beneficiary equal to a small administrative fee plus lien interest on the death benefit paid in advance.

## How LifeTime Benefit Term with Long Term Care works<sup>†</sup>

- A 35-year-old non-smoker can purchase \$50,000 of coverage including the Accelerated Death Benefit for Long Term Care and Terminal Illness with Extension of Benefits for \$7.29 weekly.
- Long Term Care benefit of \$2,000 (4% of \$50,000) per month would be available for up to 75 months.
- Long Term Care benefit reduces the death benefit by an equal amount.



Depending on your needs

- 100% of the Death Benefit amount can be paid to your beneficiary if no LTC benefits are used, or
- 100% of the Long Term Care benefit amount can be paid to you, if care is needed, or
- Any remaining Death Benefit less any Long Term Care benefits received will be paid to your beneficiary.

Rates and values shown in this example are based on a gender mix of 30% male and 70% female. The monthly LTC payment equals 4% of the initial death benefit. The maximum LTC payments equals 3 times the current death benefit. The current death benefit at time of LTC payment may differ from original death benefit. The certificate contains a guarantee ensuring that the initial death benefit will last for the longer of 25 years or to age 70 and thereafter can never be less than 50% of your initial death benefit. Assumes current rate of interest is 3.5%.

<sup>†</sup> This example is only an illustration. Do not send money to the insurer in response to this advertisement; one needs to complete an application to obtain coverage. Benefit exclusions and limitation may apply to the coverage.

LBT-EE-LTC75-F (6-13)