
THE FARM CREDIT COUNCIL

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New Position to Focus Efforts on Young, Beginning and Small Farmers

WASHINGTON – As the challenges faced by those seeking to enter agriculture continue to increase, the farmer-led board of directors of the Farm Credit Council has created a new staff position that will focus additional resources on supporting the efforts of Farm Credit System institutions to serve young, beginning and small farmers and ranchers.

“Farm Credit institutions are leading providers of credit to young, beginning and small farmers,” said Ken Auer, President & CEO of The Farm Credit Council. “Every Farm Credit institution has its own program tailored to meet the local needs of young, beginning, and small farmers. As cooperative institutions owned and directed by farmers, Farm Credit is very sensitive to the needs of the next generation of producers because the System’s customer-owners know from experience the challenges of starting out.

“This new position on the Council staff will provide Farm Credit even more opportunity to coordinate efforts with the many national organizations that also are working hard to ensure that young, beginning and small farmers have the opportunities they need to succeed,” Auer said.

Another area of focus for the position will be on connecting directly with organizations that advocate for minority farmers.

“Many new entrants to agriculture are minorities. While Farm Credit institutions always have served equally all farmers needing credit, we want to make sure that all market segments know the value that Farm Credit can bring to their operations. This is a strategic priority for Farm Credit,” Auer added.



The Council also announced that filling this new staff position will be Gary Matteson, who until recently was a small farmer operating a greenhouse business in Epsom, N.H., growing anemones for the wholesale cut flower market. In addition to having been an agricultural entrepreneur himself, Matteson has served on the board of directors of a Farm Credit institution, and was a founding member and long-time chairman of the board of trustees of New Hampshire Made, a non-profit organization that promotes New Hampshire made products and services.

“Gary Matteson brings a wealth of personal experience and enthusiasm to this position,” Auer said.

Matteson also serves on the board of the Boston Flower Exchange, the New Hampshire Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture, and chaired the New Hampshire governor’s Farm Viability Task Force in 2006. He holds bachelor’s degrees in agronomy and biology from the University of Connecticut.

“Identifying and meeting the needs of the next generation of farmers and ranchers is part of Farm Credit’s enduring mission of service to agriculture and rural America,” Matteson said. “Farm Credit brings a unique opportunity for the next generation of farmers and ranchers. When they borrow from Farm Credit they become owners of their lending institution, one that advocates for agriculture, understands the dynamic needs of the agricultural marketplace, and is a specialist in rural and agricultural financing.

“This new position offers me a great opportunity to bring together the creative work being done by a lot of national organizations focused on the challenges of young, beginning, small and minority farmers, with the ability of Farm Credit institutions to provide the credit and expertise that these young entrepreneurs need to succeed,” Matteson added. “Farm Credit provided some \$5.5 billion to young farmers, \$9.3 billion for beginning farmers, and \$11 billion for small farmers in 2006. Creating partnerships for success is what this job is all about and with the demonstrated commitment that Farm Credit has to agriculture’s future, I expect to be kept very busy.”

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The Farm Credit System is rural America's customer-owned partner. Farm Credit helps maintain and improve the quality of life in rural America and on the farm, through its constant commitment to competitive lending, expert financial services and advice, and a feeling of partnership with its customers. The Farm Credit Council is the national trade association representing the interests of the institutions of the Farm Credit System. For more information visit www.fccouncil.com.