

THE FARM CHAMPION



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Featured AgFTAP Resource

Interactive Schedule F, Profit or Loss from Farming

This Interactive online course explains and provides examples for each line of the farmer's primary tax form, IRS Schedule F, Profit or Loss from Farming.

[Link](#)

TIGHT CREDIT, SMARTER PLANNING: WHAT FARMERS NEED TO KNOW

BY DR. RYAN LOY & DR. RON RAINEY

As producers head into another growing season, financial pressure across agriculture continues to rise. Higher input costs, lower commodity prices, and market uncertainty are leading lenders and farmers alike to take a more cautious approach.

One of the clearest signs is the sharp increase in interest expenses. According to USDA-NASS data, total farm interest expense rose from \$540 million in 2021 to more than \$950 million in 2024. At the same time, operating expense loans increased from approximately \$48 billion in 2023 to nearly \$72 billion by Q4 2025, reflecting growing reliance on short-term financing to manage production costs and cash flow.

Lenders are still providing credit, but expectations have shifted. Financial institutions are placing greater emphasis on realistic budgets, repayment planning, and strong recordkeeping practices. Meanwhile, fewer producers are taking on machinery and equipment loans, signaling a more conservative approach to expansion and investment.

For producers, these trends reinforce the importance of proactive financial management — including maintaining liquidity, strengthening cash reserves, and utilizing trusted educational and technical assistance resources to support informed decision-making.

Full Article Available Soon



Featured FARM Champion Spotlight + Farmer Success Story



CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT

JONATHAN SHEPHERD

Jonathan Shepherd demonstrates impact as a FARM Champion through his work supporting farmers with recordkeeping and tax planning.

WHAT ARE FARM CHAMPIONS?

1-888-200-6013

<https://agftap.org>

Jonathan worked with a farm family involved in agritourism that struggled to secure capital because their records did not clearly separate farm and agritourism income. After improving their recordkeeping systems, they were able to present a clearer financial picture to lenders and investors. Their efforts helped them secure funding from a community investment bank, which later sparked interest from additional lenders as well. **[Learn more about Jonathan's work.](#)**

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Check Out The April FARM Champion Podcasts Episodes!



Ron Rainey

"So we're trying to help farmers understand the environment that they're currently operating in and trying to figure out avenues to hopefully increase their profitability..."

[Link to Episode](#)



Allison Vetter

"We have a lot of information that is easily available. They can access it immediately and apply it in their operations quickly. And by utilizing the network producers can locate local FARM Champions."

[Link to Episode](#)



Ryan Loy

"And one thing I always say when I'm meeting with producer groups or even any group, is that if you don't know what your budget is to the penny, then you really don't know what your profitability is or lack thereof."

[Link to Episode](#)



Erica Barnes Fields

"Early intervention can prevent crisis and save farms. A simple check in, a shared a cup of coffee, or a quiet conversation can help you notice when something is off."

[Link to Episode](#)