

December 2012



Calhoun County FSA Updates

Calhoun County FSA Office

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Marshall, Michigan 49068

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**County Executive
Director:**
Elizabeth Lake

Farm Loan Manager:
Mack Francoeur

Program Technicians:
Bonnie Baxter
Kim Odette
Dana Sherman, FLP



COC Election Results

Congratulations to Sharon Williams! Sharon has been elected to represent the residents in Local Administrative Area #1 for the next three years, starting January 1, 2013. This includes the townships of Bedford, Convis, Emmett, Lee, Marshall, Pennfield, and the City of Battle Creek.

We would like to thank David Bosserd for his dedication and service on the Calhoun FSA County Committee for the past nine years.

Guaranteed Loan Limit

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program is currently \$1,302,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness has increased to \$1,602,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact Mack Francoeur, Farm Loan Manager, at the Calhoun County FSA office with questions about farm loans.

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

USDA has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between Sept. 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in their communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, people seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's news release click on the following link:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>

Farm Service Agency Deadlines

December 24 – Office closing at 1:30 for the Christmas holiday

December 25 – Christmas Day – office closed

January 1 – New Year's Day – Office closed

January 15 – New crop reporting date for apples, blueberries, strawberries, cherries, grapes, peaches

January 21 – Martin Luther King holiday – office closed

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).