



Van Buren/Kalamazoo/Berrien Farm Service Agency NEWSLETTER

June 2009

Issue No. 2

VAN BUREN FSA

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COUNTY COMMITTEE

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STAFF

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Mary Jo Hendrixson, PT
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KALAMAZOO FSA

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BERRIEN FSA

3334 Edgewood Rd.
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Calvin Gnodkke
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Paul Wagner, FLO
Delores Whitson, PT
James L. Vogt, CED

HOURS

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

ACREAGE REPORTING

Acreage reporting time is here! Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs including but not limited to: DCP, CRP, NAP and Commodity Loans. It is important that acreage reported to Federal Crop Insurance and the FSA Office must match.

The deadline to report crop acreage is June 30th, 2009, for fall seeded small grains and July 15th, 2009, for all other crops. If you have not received an appointment postcard, please contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment.

THINKING OF CLEARING A FENCE ROW?

Most USDA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop (sodbuster), as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Further, USDA participants are prohibited from converting wetlands for agricultural production purposes (swampbuster) and planting an agricultural commodity on converted wetlands, as determined by NRCS. Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers come into the FSA office ahead of time to file an AD 1026 for referral to NRCS.

It is necessary for NRCS to review *any* actions which could result in the modification of an area determined wet. This includes any clearing of trees or brush (including fence rows), draining, dredging, filling, or plans to install, maintain or improve tile.

ACRE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT NOW THROUGH AUGUST 14

The Average Crop Revenue Program (ACRE) began April 27, 2009 and runs through August 14, 2009. Producers currently enrolled in DCP for 2009 have the option of cancelling farms that they wish to enroll in ACRE. Producers who elect the ACRE program are required to obtain signatures of all landowners on form CCC-509 ACRE. Once CCC-509 ACRE has all signatures, the producer is then eligible to enroll in ACRE. However, once a farm is enrolled in ACRE, the farm remains in ACRE until 2012.

Producers who elect the ACRE program agree to: forgo counter-cyclical payments, accept a 20% reduction of their direct payments and accept a 30% reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm.

Farm yields for crop years 2004-2008 will be involved in the farm trigger process and therefore, are needed. Yields are established using production evidence, including crop insurance yields that the producer would need to obtain. If production evidence is not available, average county yields can be used.

The deadline to elect and enroll in ACRE is August 14th. Please contact your local FSA office for an appointment.

2009 DIRECT AND COUNTER-CYCLICAL PAYMENT (DCP) PROGRAM SIGNUP EXTENDED

Signup for 2009 DCP has been extended through August 14, 2009. Contact your local FSA Office to schedule an appointment.

CONSERVATION RESERVE

While it's unlikely there will be a general CRP signup in the near future, landowners or operators who would like to enroll 10 or more acres in CRP may be eligible to enroll in CRP SAFE. Please contact your local FSA for more information.

NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) PROVISIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE



NAP basic provisions are now available as CCC-471 NAP BP. This document provides general information on the NAP process for producers filing a 2009 or later CCC-471. The public may access CCC-471 NAP BP through the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>. After accessing the web site, CLICK "Disaster Assistance Programs." On the Disaster Assistance Programs Home Page CLICK "View NAP Basic Provisions" located under "I Want To..."

ATTENTION NAP POLICY HOLDERS!!!

Producers must file a *notice of loss* with their local FSA office within 15 calendar days from the disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses or the final planting date for prevented planting. The notice of loss must be filed for *each* weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence that causes damage to or loss of the specific crop or commodity.

Producers are responsible for providing accurate and complete *reports of production* on a timely basis each and every year after harvest. The deadline to report production is July 15 of the year following harvest. It is the producer's responsibility to report the total amount of production for their entire unit. It is not FSA's responsibility to determine the producer's amount of production.

FSA FARM LOANS

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who can not obtain commercial credit from a bank or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, loan rates, loan term and use of proceeds. Van Buren County farmers should contact Bill Hogan at 269-657-7055. Kalamazoo County farmers should contact Phill DeYoung at 269-781-4263. Berrien County farmers should contact Paul Wagner at 269-471-9111.

FARM LOAN LIMITS

The new farm bill expands and enhances farm loan programs and preferences for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, increases loan limits for all borrowers, including the increase of direct ownership loan borrowing limit to \$300,000 and the increase of operating loan borrowing limit to \$300,000.

LOANS AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who has operated a farm for not more than 10 years, will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm, agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA, and does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.

YOUTH LOANS

FSA can make loans to youth to establish and operate income producing projects in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations. *The maximum loan size is \$5,000.* To qualify, a participant must be between 10 and 20 years old, live in a town of less than 10,000, be unable to obtain a loan from other sources, and conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work. Applicants must also be capable of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor.

DISASTER DESIGNATIONS AFFECTING VAN BUREN, KALAMAZOO & BERRIEN COUNTIES

- Drought conditions from May 1, 2008, through September 17, 2008
- Severe frost/freeze and cold weather events from March 1, 2008, through May 31, 2008
- Storms with excessive rain, flooding and high winds from April 12, 2008, through September 16, 2008



USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine. Emergency loan funds may be used to restore or replace essential property; pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; pay essential family living expenses; reorganize the farming operation; and refinance certain debts. Contact your local Farm Loan Manager for more information.

HONEY BEE LOSSES COVERED UNDER NEW ELAP PROGRAM

As part of the 2008 farm bill, disaster assistance for honey bee producers who incur physical losses of honey bees and honey bee hives because of colony collapse disorder and other adverse weather conditions may soon be able to file an application under the new Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).



To qualify for ELAP, honey producers must have purchased a NAP (Non-Insured Assistance Program) policy, or be covered under the Buy-In provisions provided earlier this year. Honey bee producers who incur physical losses of honey bees and honey bee hives because of colony collapse disorder must provide documentation and/or a certification that the loss of honey bees was because of colony collapse disorder, as well as documentation of inventory on the beginning date of the colony collapse or adverse weather event and the ending inventory.

Although a sign-up date has not yet been issued, producers are encouraged to begin compiling their loss documentation which will be required with their ELAP application process. Watch your mail for official sign-up dates and to contact your FSA Office to make an appointment to sign up under the ELAP Program.

FOREIGN LANDOWNERS



The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

FREE PESTICIDE DISPOSAL AVAILABLE

Do you have old, out-of-date or unusable pesticides stored in your barn or garage? Would you like a safe disposal option?

Kalamazoo County's Clean Sweep & Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center offers FREE disposal of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides to any grower in Michigan. This program is available through the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program. Growers in Van Buren and Kalamazoo Counties (and any other county in Michigan) can use this free service. No appointment is needed, nor is there any paperwork to complete. There is no limit to how much you can bring in. However, if you have large quantities (over 250 lbs.) or have 55-gallons drums, call the Center to discuss the best time to come in.



For more information, either contact the friendly folks at Kalamazoo County Clean Sweep & HHW Center, 269-383-8741 or the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program representative in your County. If you live in Kalamazoo County and would like more information, please call Linda Zabik at the Kalamazoo Conservation District office at 269-327-1258 or email linda.zabik@mi.nacdn.net. Van Buren County producers should contact Kyle Mead at the Van Buren Conservation District office at 269-657-4030 or email kyle.mead@mi.nacdn.net. Berrien County producers should contact Suzanne Forraht at 269-471-9111 or email suzanne.forraht@mi.nacdn.net. Easy, convenient and free, Clean Sweep can help you to clean up your farm and protect the groundwater.

KALAMAZOO CONSERVATION DISTRICT TO HOST WORKSHOP: IMPROVING IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT UNIFORMITY EVALUATION & IRRIGATION SCHEDULING

Attention all irrigators, crop consultants, irrigation industry professionals, and agricultural agency personnel: The Kalamazoo Conservation District is hosting a workshop with Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS). This workshop will show participants how they will benefit from learning how to evaluate center pivot irrigation system uniformity and irrigation scheduling methods.

Those attending will see the data gathering system for evaluating system uniformity, irrigation run-off observation techniques, and use of an excel spreadsheet to create a report back to the irrigator. Recent additions to this training offer a method for creating updated percent timer tables. An overview of irrigation scheduling methods will provide participants with a background in irrigation scheduling tools currently available.

The workshop will be held on Friday, June 26, 2009, in the Galesburg Area - Just off I-94 between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, Michigan. The cost for the workshop is \$15 (payable at the door). Lunch will be provided. Please call either Kathy Buckham or Linda Zabik at the Kalamazoo Conservation District at 269-327-1258 ext. 4 to reserve your spot. For a detailed agenda, map to site, and list of presenters for the workshop, visit the Kalamazoo Conservation District website at www.kalamazooconservation.org.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 VAN BUREN FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 1035 EAST MICHIGAN AVENUE
 PAW PAW, MICHIGAN 49079

PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 LANSING, MI
 PERMIT NO. 19

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

June 10	Kalamazoo County Committee Meeting
June 10	Berrien County Committee Meeting
June 16	Van Buren County Committee Meeting
June 30	Last Day to Report Fall-Seeded Crops
July 3	Independence Day Holiday – Offices Closed
July 8	Kalamazoo County Committee Meeting
July 8	Berrien County Committee Meeting
July 15	Last Day to Report Spring-Seeded Crops
July 21	Van Buren County Committee Meeting
August 3	Last Day to Submit County Committee Nominations
August 12	Kalamazoo County Committee Meeting
August 12	Berrien County Committee Meeting
August 14	Last Day to Enroll in DCP and ACRE
August 18	Van Buren County Committee Meeting
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – Offices Closed
Ongoing	CRP-SAFE Program Enrollment
Ongoing	CRP Continuous Signup
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans

eGOV CUSTOMER REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Access your website of interest:
 - USDA Customer Statement
<http://customerstatement.usda.gov>
 - Electronic LDP Signup
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm
 - Electronic DCP Signup
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp_default.htm
2. Create an online user profile and apply for Level 2 access
3. Respond to the verification email within 7 days of receipt.
4. Visit the County Office in person and provide photo identification to the Local Registration Authority in order to receive Level 2 Activation.
5. Access Level 2 applications within 1 hour after profile has been activated.



SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact their local County Office in person or by phone.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.