



Cass Farm Service Agency NEWSLETTER

Cass FSA

1127 E. State St
Cassopolis MI 49031
269-445-8641
269-445-0619 FAX

County Committee

Michael Gordon
David Grabemeyer
Carl Sparks
Esther Leach

Staff

Marcia J Collins, CED
Kay A Strom, PT
Judi Kidman, PT
Zelda Cloud, PT
Rhonda Barnett, PT
John Green, FA
Robert Dohm, FA
Richard Swartz, FA

FSA Website

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

Hours

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



2007 DISASTER PROGRAMS EXTENDED TO INCLUDE ALL 2007 CROPS AND LOSSES

On December 26, 2007, the President signed into law the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (The 2008 Act). This act included provisions to extend the eligibility date for crops planted and harvested to December 31, 2007. All other eligibility requirements were not changed. This includes the requirement that you must have purchased either crop insurance or NAP and have a qualifying loss (more than 35%) due to a natural disaster that occurred between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007.

For CDP purposes, this date change does not make 2008 crops planted in 2007 eligible under CDP.



Signup for CDP is underway. *Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.*

For losses to livestock feed see the LCP Program on the next page.

NAP/CROP INSURANCE DEADLINES

This is a reminder, the deadline to purchase crop insurance and NAP is March 15th for crops that are annually planted in the spring. Crop insurance is available from an insurance agent and NAP is available from our office. NAP is available for any crop that is not covered by crop insurance. The cost is \$100 a crop, with a maximum payment of \$300 per county. If you have any questions please contact our office.

2007 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The FSA County Committee (COC) elections were completed in December. We would like to thank all those who took the time to vote for the individual of their choice and a great big thank you to those who were willing to serve on the committee! Results for Cass County are as follows:

CASS COUNTY LAA #2

(Silver Creek, Wayne, Pokagon, Howard, and Milton Townships)

David Grabemeyer - COC Member
Michael Studer- 1st Alternate to COC

WELCOME A PROGRAM TECHNICIAN

We would like to welcome the newest member to our office team, Rhonda Barnett. Rhonda brings with her a wealth of knowledge about farming and business. She has owned her own businesses and helps her husband Gary and her father in law, Brad, with their farming operation. Rhonda has 3 children,

Since Rhonda is related to Brad Barnett, COC member for LAA #1, he has resigned from the COC. Carl Sparks, 1st Alternate, will now represent LAA #1. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Brad for all his hard work representing the farmers of his area, he will also be greatly missed by the office staff. *Welcome Carl!*

COC ADVISOR

We have a new Advisor! We would like to welcome Esther Leach to the Cass County COC. Esther and her husband Dave have been farming for more than 30 years. Patrick Duff, our COC Advisor for nine years was no longer eligible due to term limits. We would like to thank Pat for all his hard work.

DDAP-III

A new program called Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment III (DDAP-III) Program has been approved. To qualify producers must have had a loss in production from the dairy operations base years (2003-2004) in 2005, 2006 or 2007 due to a declared natural disaster. Producers must provide our office with the average number of cows in the herd (this includes the dry cows) for the base years and the years for which you are applying. We will also need your total production for those years. A statement authorizing your milk handler (cooperative) to send this information directly to our office, is available.

BEWARE OF CROP INSURANCE REBATING SCHEMES

With the spring sales closing date for many Federal crop insurance policies right around the corner, crop insurance agents have stepped up their marketing efforts. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has received reports from producers and agents that some aggressive marketers have been approaching producers with rebating offers. These schemes promise lower insurance premiums, refunds, dividends, or items of value tied to crop insurance purchases. Most of these activities are illegal. RMA reminds all Federal crop insurance program participants that it is now coordinating with state regulators to take appropriate regulatory action against all those who are found to promote or participate in such schemes. **Producers who are found to participate in illegal rebating activities will not only lose their crop insurance coverage but will also lose eligibility in all USDA programs.** Producers and agents can report suspicions of illegal rebating to the OIG Hotline: 1-800-424-9121.

2005-2007 LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM (LCP)

LCP provides benefits to livestock producers who suffered feed losses or incurred additional feed costs directly resulting from natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2007.

Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas or counties declared presidential disaster areas between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2007, are eligible. Also, producers in primary counties (and contiguous counties) that received an approved Administrator's Physical Loss Notification (APLN), when the APLN is directly associated to a natural disaster designated by President Bush, are eligible.

To be eligible under LCP, livestock must be dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, swine, goats or deer that:

- have been physically located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period;
- have been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation on the beginning date of the disaster period; and
- have not been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. Such excluded uses include, but are not limited to, wild free roaming animals or animals used for recreational purposes such as pleasure, hunting, pets, roping or for show.

Eligible producers must have either owned or cash-leased eligible livestock (but not both for the same livestock) on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period and must be a citizen of, or legal resident alien in, the United States. They also must have suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of eligible disaster events during the applicable disaster periods. The feed lost or additional incurred feed costs must have been intended for use with eligible livestock.

FSA will calculate LCP payments by multiplying the national payment rate for each livestock category by the number of eligible livestock in each category. Producers may receive no more than \$80,000 under LCP. An individual or entity whose average adjusted gross income exceeds \$2.5 million for the three years immediately preceding the calendar year for which benefits are requested is ineligible for LCP benefits unless 75% or more of their income is from agriculture.



In addition to a completed application filed during the application period, livestock producers applying for LCP must submit adequate proof that the feed loss or incurred additional feed costs:

- were for the claimed eligible livestock;
- occurred as a direct result of an eligible disaster event during an eligible disaster period in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested;
- other supporting documentation necessary to determine the applicant's eligibility. Supporting documents may include, but are not limited to, verifiable purchase records, veterinarian records, bank of other loan papers, rendering truck receipts, FEMA records, National Guard records, written contracts, production records, IRS records, property tax records, private insurance documents, sales records or similar documents.

Signup for the 2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program began September 10, 2007. No final signup date has been announced. ***Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.***

EMERGENCY FARM LOANS AVAILABLE

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.

<i>Designation Code & Declaration Date</i>	<i>Counties Affected</i>	<i>Disaster Description</i>	<i>Dates of Disaster</i>	<i>Final Date To Apply</i>
S2628 11/07/2007	Cass	Drought	04/01/2007	07/07/2008
S2631 11/14/2007	Cass	Several Frost and Freeze Events	04/04/2007- 06/13/2007	07/14/2008
S2636 11/20/2007	Cass	Tornadoes, Hail, Excessive Rain, and High Winds	05/15/2007- 09/11/2007	07/21/2008

Emergency loans may be made to farmers and ranchers who:

- Own or operate land located in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as a disaster area or quarantine area (for physical losses only, the FSA Administrator may authorize emergency loan assistance);
- Are established family farm operators and have sufficient farming or ranching experience;
- Are citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Have suffered at least a 30-percent loss in crop production or a physical loss to livestock, livestock products, real estate, or chattel property;
- Have an acceptable credit history;
- Are unable to receive credit from commercial sources;
- Can provide collateral to secure the loan; and
- Have repayment ability.



The current annual interest rate for emergency loans is 3.75 percent.

Producers should contact William Hogan at 269-657-7055 to make application.

2007-CROP COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. Contact your local office for more information.

FOREIGN LANDOWNERS REPORTING REQUIREMENT



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% 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.

2008 CROP YEAR WOOL LDP

The deadline to request a 2008 crop year Wool LDP is March 15, 2008. If you have a wool receipt for 2008 and have not turned it in yet, please do so by the deadline.

*** DID YOU KNOW??? The average American eats 124 lbs. of potatoes each year! ***



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

March 15	Sales Closing Date for Crop Insurance on Corn, Seed Corn, Soybeans, Canning Beans, Popcorn, Oats, Barley
March 15	Deadline to Purchase NAP Coverage for Spring-Seeded Vegetables
March 15	Deadline to receive 2008 Wool LDP
March 31	Final Date to Obtain 2007-Crop Wheat, Oats & Barley Loans & LDPs
Ongoing	2005 – 2007 Crop Disaster Program
Ongoing	2005 – 2007 Livestock Compensation Program
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.