

THE

NORTHWESTERLY

Serving Farmers in the Grand Traverse Bay Area

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ISSUE 1

USDA SERVICE CENTER
GRAND TRAVERSE AREA
1501 CASS ST, SUITE A
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Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Office & Field Staff

Greg Shy, CED
Julie Jimkoski
Jan Malik
Mary Coleman

Farm Loan Staff

Jim Monroe, FLM
John Neff

County Committee

Brent Wagner, Chairman
Gregory Send, V. Chairman
Chris Garthe, Member
Dennis Iott, Member
David Noonan, Member
Joanne Gallagher, Advisor



COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to Dennis Iott and Greg Send on their re-election to the County Committee. Greg Send from Williamsburg was elected for his second term as the county committee member from LAA#3 (Acme, East Bay, Garfield, Long Lake, Peninsula, and Whitewater Twp.) and Joanne Gallagher from Long Lake Twp. was elected alternate. Dennis Iott from Oliver Twp. was elected for his third term to represent farmers in LAA #5 (Kalkaska County) and Bruce Cotton from Excelsior Twp. was elected alternate. The new County Committee members took office on January 1st.

During the organizational meeting held January 9th Brent Wagner was elected County Committee Chairman and Greg Send was elected Vice-chairman.

FSA would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote in the committee elections.

Committee members are a critical component of the day to day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on the committee help decide the kind of programs their counties offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of the local producers. Committees make decisions on:

- Commodity loans and payments
- Establishment of yields
- Conservation programs
- Other farm disaster assistance.

The County Committee has determined that county committee meetings will be held at 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month at the USDA Service Center in Traverse City. The public is invited to attend. The meeting date is subject to change. Please call in advance to verify the date.

2005-2007 DISASTER PROGRAMS

Due to the many natural disasters which have occurred, Congress included a number of disaster programs in the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007.

The Crop Disaster Program (CDP) provides benefits to farmers who suffered 35% quantity and/or 25% quality losses to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. **2007 losses were just recently added to this program.** Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 will receive payment for the one year in which the benefit is the highest. **Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.**

Signup for the 2005-2007 CDP quantity losses began October 15, 2007. No deadline date has been determined. Signup for CDP quality losses will be announced at a future date. A quality loss of 25% or greater is needed to qualify. Details on quality loss provisions will be announced at a later date.

In determining production, participants must supply verifiable and reliable production records to substantiate production to the FSA county committee. FSA uses RMA (crop insurance) loss records for insured crops where available and determined to be accurate. FSA includes all harvested production, non-harvested appraised production, and assigned production for the total planted acreage of the crop unit to determine production under CDP. The maximum CDP benefits a person may receive is \$80,000. CDP requires a 35 percent loss of expected production; therefore, you may be eligible for a payment even if it was determined that the loss was not great enough under NAP or RMA coverage.

Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) 2005-2007

Unlike the CDP program, you did not have to have insurance to apply for benefits under this program. Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007 are eligible to apply. To be eligible under LCP, livestock must: • Be dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer that; • Have been physically located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period • Not

have been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. Producers must have either owned or cash leased eligible livestock. • **Suffered a loss in pasture or grazing availability, suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of an eligible disaster event.** Signup has started with no ending date announced. Contact the office prior to making your visit to apply and we will send you the LCP worksheet to aid you in gathering the required information to make application for benefit.

Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program (DDAP)

The DDAP program provides benefits to eligible dairy producers who suffered dairy production losses as a result of natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007. Details of this program are not known as of yet. As soon as these details are known dairy producers will be notified.

NAP Coverage Deadline

Due to changes in program provisions it is even more important for producers to purchase insurance on their crops. **If your crops are not insured you will not be eligible for any disaster assistance on those crops.** The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is available for 2008 annual crops for which catastrophic level crop (CAT) insurance is not available through FCIC. CAT is available for the following crops: Apples, Barley, Corn, Oats, Snap Beans, Sweet Cherries, and Wheat. All other crops are insurable under NAP. NAP must be purchased by November 20th for 2009 perennial crops. The application fee for NAP crops is \$100 per crop; or \$300 per producer per county.

March 15th is the NAP and FCIC application closing date for most 2008 annual crops. If you carried NAP coverage on your crops for crop year 2007, please remember to provide your production records to the FSA office by July 15th. This is required for all crops which are covered under a NAP policy. To remain compliant in NAP, producers must: 1) timely file acreage reports; 2) follow HEL and Wetland conservation compliance requirements; 3) file Notice of Loss within 15 days of weather damage or within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent; 4) request loss adjustment appraisals if any crop will not be harvested or to document production left in the field; and 5) provide true and complete production records for the unit.

NAP policies on hay and pasture must be purchased by September 20th.

Reporting Changes

It is important to remember to contact the office with any record changes that may have occurred. These changes would include, but are not limited to:

- Address – any contact information.
- Direct Deposit – to ensure payments are deposited correctly, it is imperative that any changes in bank account information is updated immediately.
- Development – any new parcels of land removed for houses needs to be reported.
- Owner/Operator Changes – report any changes in land ownership, tenants or crop share arrangements.
- Reconstitutions – changes that requires farm combinations or separations due to sale of land or change in operators should be reported as soon as possible.
- Farm Operating Plan – any changes to the farming operation that may have an effect on “person” and/or “actively engaged” determinations.

Emergency Loans Available

Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Kalkaska farmers who suffered significant damage due to Drought in 2007 may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency if they are unable to get financing from any other source. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75 percent. Farmers who suffered a 30% loss in crop production caused by the drought may qualify for Emergency (EM) loan assistance from FSA. Farmers who qualify for an EM loan can also use emergency loan funds to pay annual operating expenses and/or essential family living expenses; refinance certain debts (Real estate or consumer debts can not be refinanced with EM loan funds); and/or replace lost working capital, and/or reorganize the farming operation. Loan applications will be accepted at the FSA office through July 7, 2008.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants

The Farm Service Agency can make direct and guaranteed loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds for these loans are reserved each year.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. Socially disadvantaged groups include women, African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asian Americans.

Direct loans may be made to applicants by FSA for both farm operating and farm ownership loans. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to federal or state supervision (e.g., banks and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. FSA typically guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.

Persons who are primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations may apply. Socially disadvantaged loan applicants *do not* receive automatic approval. Individual applicants under this program must meet *all* requirements for FSA’s regular farm loan program assistance.

Commodity and Farm Storage Loans

Commodity loans for eligible commodities continue to be available. The loan rates for 2007 crops are as follows: Barley \$1.69, Corn \$1.79, Oats \$1.34, Soybeans \$4.86, Sunflowers \$8.30 and Wheat \$2.27. Commodity loans mature 9 months following the month of disbursement and must be requested before March 31st for honey and small grains and May 31st for the other commodities. The interest rate is 4.250%. Due to high commodity prices there are currently no crops eligible to receive LDP’s. Loans to erect new storage facilities are also available at an interest rate of 3.625%.

Latest Farm Bill News

Public information regarding the new Farm Bill is very sketchy. Although speculation is abundant, there is not yet a program to present to producers. With the new bill, any information relating to program payments and provisions will not be available until regulations are written and sign-up is announced. Until then, other program areas directly affected by the farm bill cannot be addressed. Also, there will be informational meetings for producers to assist them in signing up for the new farm program. Producers will be notified of the meeting dates and times and when sign-up will begin.

New Employees Join FSA Team

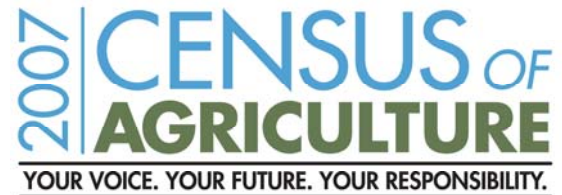
Congratulations to Jan Malik, Program Technician, and Mary Coleman, Temporary Program Technician who have recently joined the FSA team. During your next visit to the office please take the time to introduce yourself to our new employees.

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2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Report forms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture were mailed to farm and ranch operators on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site.



NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

On Going	-CDP signup
On Going	-LCP signup
To Be Ann.	-Dairy Assist. Payment Program
Feb. 18th	-Office closed for Presidents Day
March 15th	-Final date to purchase crop or NAP insurance
July 15th	-Crop reporting and production evidence date
Sept. 20th	-Final date to purchase hay or pasture insurance

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