



April 2008

Kent/Newaygo/Muskegon Counties' News

Kent County FSA

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Grand Rapids MI 49525
616-942-4111 (phone)
616-940-4691 (fax)

Newaygo/Muskegon County FSA

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Websites

www.fsa.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi
www.usda.gov

Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Kent
David Dunaven
Deb Kober
Steve Koning

NEWAYGO/MUSKEGON

David Bayne
George Cousineau
John Vandenberg
James Dunn
Craig Zeerip
Jean Stroven, Advisor

County Executive Director

David Bain

Farm Loan Manager

Leslie Wills, Muskegon
Rick Dean, Newaygo
John Anton, Kent

Office Staff

KENT:
Richard Dunton
Nina Zick
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NEWAYGO/MUSKEGON:

John Vander Meulen
Lisa Smaligan
Kathy Nelson

2005-07 Disaster Program Eligibility Date Extended

The 2005-07 Disaster Program has been amended to now allow for crops planted after February 28, 2007. Now crops planted in 2005, 2006 and 2007 are eligible. CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered 35% or more quantity losses of expected production to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying losses will receive payment for the year in which the benefit is the highest. A producer may qualify for CDP payment even if they did not under their NAP or crop insurance policy.

Only those producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of the loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

Producers of multi-marketed crops (apples, cherries, peaches) must bring in sales records of their crop showing how the crop was marketed in the disaster year claimed. Each marketing channel is looked at as a separate crop. A producer may qualify for a quantity payment if a disaster event caused decreased quality forcing the crop to be shifted from the intended purpose of fresh to processed. A producer can prove his market history by providing proof from three years prior to the disaster year claimed. If proof is not provided FSA may use the producers certified marketing percentages or use the state established marketing percentages, whichever is lower.

Following are the state established marketing %:

- Apples: 40% fresh, 60% processed
- Tart Cherries: 1% fresh, 99% processed
- Swt Cherries: 15% fresh, 85% processed
- Peaches: 90% fresh, 10% processed

NEWS FLASH!!!!

The quality loss provisions just came out today. Some initial key points are producers can now sign up for quality losses. All crops are eligible with each distinct piece of verifiable records (sales

slips) to show a 25% or greater loss in value from the states established market price. The loss must have been caused by an eligible disaster event. **Don't neglect multi-marketed crops shifted to a lower market because of an eligible event. They may be eligible for this addition even though they didn't qualify for the quantity loss payment. Quality losses do not have to be eligible for a quantity payment to be eligible for a quality payment. These two are separate from each other!**

Signup for the 2005-2007 CDP quantity and quality losses are ongoing with no deadline determined at this time. Producers who previously signed up for quantity losses must come back in to sign up for quality losses. Contact the office for an appointment.

Livestock Compensation Program

The 2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) provides monetary assistance to eligible livestock owners for certain types of livestock feed losses and increased feed costs that occurred between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007 in eligible disaster counties as a direct result of an eligible disaster event. LCP signup is underway and no deadline has been announced. Please call the office for more details and an appointment.

Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program III

Producers must have produced and marketed milk in the United States any time during the period of January 2, 2005, through December 30, 2007. Adequate proof of production history must be based on milk marketing statements obtained from the dairy operation's milk handler or marketing cooperative.

- Producers must have suffered production losses attributed to a declared natural disaster during the eligible period in an approved area.

- Producers must provide proof of the average number of cows in the dairy herd and annual milk

Dairy Disaster Continued

production commercially marketed by all persons in the eligible dairy operation during the years of the base period (2003 and 2004 calendar years) and applicable disaster year that corresponds with the applicable natural disaster declaration or other period to determine the total pounds of eligible losses that will be used for payment.

FSA will base loss calculations on comparing the expected base annual production and the actual production during the applicable disaster claim year. FSA may adjust calculations when losses are not caused by the disaster. FSA may reject DDAPIII applications if a producer does not provide adequate proof of production for the periods.

The application deadline is May 5, 2008.

CRP Compliance Issues/Reminders

As a reminder the following are the producer's maintenance responsibilities for the duration of the CRP contract.

- Mowing is only allowed once per year between August 1 and August 20 and then **only** on the portion(s) of land that are in need of maintenance. (**Note: Timing exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with prior approval of the County Committee.**)

- **NOXIOUS WEEDS MUST BE CONTROLLED.** If this is necessary prior to August 1; you must request permission, in writing, from the County Committee to mow or spray **and then ONLY the affected acres.**

- Periodic mowing, mowing for cosmetic purposes, and mowing for generic weed control **is prohibited at all times.**

- Warm season grasses and wildflowers **WILL NOT** be mowed lower than 12 inches.

If you have any questions about maintenance issues please call the office for clarification and/or to make sure you will still be in compliance with your CRP contract provisions.

NEW!!!! COMPUTER GENERATED MAPS: Common Land Unit (CLU) Certification

The Kent and Newaygo/Muskegon FSA staffs are continuing to work on correcting the CLU GIS maps and updating farm records. We are making good progress and appreciate your patience during this long and detailed process. The certification process involves many steps. Some records are accurate and need very little adjustment, however others need considerable adjusting. Land owners and/or operators will receive notification of any needed action as we proceed. Acreage may increase, decrease, or stay the same after CLU is certified.

Hopefully all GIS map photos will be mailed before July 30th. These maps will include farm and tract numbers and other pertinent information. Please note that the "photo imagery" is from the early 1990's but the boundary lines of your current field(s) is/are what needs to be correct so proper determinations can be made and acres are correct. GIS map photos will be printed by tract and be mailed by chronological FSA farm# order to each owner and the primary operator. Do not be concerned if you do not receive GIS photo maps of all farms/tracts you own or operate at once. Owners will only receive tracts they have an interest in. The primary operator will receive all tracts associated with the farm# he is operating.

A tract is defined as all contingent land under the same ownership. A farm may have multiple tracts in it. If your cropland fields do not have an HEL or NHEL on them, this indicates that land may not be considered cropland or that a HEL determination has not been completed on the way the field is drawn. This may indicate an updated form AD-1026 may be necessary to continue to receive further payments.

For wetlands and HEL determinations form CPA-026 (Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination) mailed by NRCS is the official determination that should be referred to. Even if cropland has a HEL/NHEL map designation, this may not be correct due to boundary error.

2008 Farm Bill

Information regarding the 2008 farm bill and the pending 2008 enrollment is still on hold. Some information has been received through press releases, articles, etc. but nothing has been finalized and enrollment options, dates and/or deadlines have not been established. Please keep an eye on newsletters or other farm articles published regarding the final implementation of the farm bill.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Starting this fall owners and operators of certain cropland in Kent, Newaygo and Muskegon Counties may enroll eligible land in a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) conservation practice titled State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), also known as CP38. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct sign-up for SAFE on a continuous (ongoing) basis.

Through continuous CRP sign-up, USDA accepts offers by producers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Producers can offer land for enrollment in SAFE and other CRP programs at their local FSA service center. Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in CRP contracts for 10-15 years (the contract length depends on the SAFE proposal authorized for the area). In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

Details on this program are still being finalized. Additional information will be provided in newsletters and press releases.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date to ensure eligibility and to maintain crop history.

Acreage reports are required for many FSA programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program)

Acreage Reporting Continued

crops, **acreage reports are to be certified by the June 30 deadline on small grains and a July 15 deadline on all other crops.**

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30 for small grains and July 15 for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

Final planting dates:

- Wheat October 25th
- Oats and Sugar Beets May 20th
- Corn June 5th
- Soybeans June 15th
- Dry Edible Beans June 25th

Thinking of Tiling or Clearing land?

Don't forget the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Provisions. Bringing new land into production by **clearing trees, improving drainage by tiling or dredging are potential violations of the HEL/WC rules.** Before you begin any land conversion project, please come into the county office to file form AD-1026. Natural Resources Conservation Service will make an evaluation of your land to determine how to manage the wet areas of your land most efficiently. Checking ahead of time will help keep you eligible for USDA benefits. **Remember any changes of field boundaries from the original determination may be cause to initiate a new AD-1026.**

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, rates, term and use of proceeds.

Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged

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 whom:

- 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.
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.

Youth Loans

FSA can make loans to youths 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 the applicant 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
- 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. For more information applicants should contact their applicable Farm Loan Officer. This information is located on page one.

Signature Authority For Husbands And Wives

A husband and wife can sign on behalf of each other for most FSA programs in which either has an interest. However, this does not include loan documents. **A Power of Attorney form must be on file in order to sign loan documents on behalf of your spouse.** Contact the office for more information.

Complaint Process

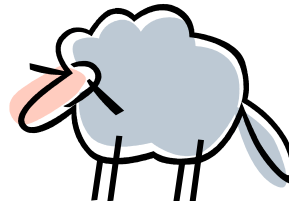
After an official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a decision letter and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, participants have four choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, appeal to the State Committee and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division (NAD).

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

Wool and Mohair LDPs

The 2008 crop year for wool and mohair began January 1st. Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are available for 2008 wool and mohair. Make sure you have a CCC-633EZ on file before you lose beneficial interest in your 2008 Wool. You can obtain this form online or from our office.



Appointments Recommended

In order to provide better service to producers, we are asking that you call for an appointment when signing up for programs, requesting loans, and certifying acreage. This will allow us to make sure that we have the necessary records and forms ready for you and save you time while in the office. **Thank you for your cooperation!**

Controlled Substances

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium poppies and other drug producing plants.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made for the physically impaired, visually or hearing impaired upon request.



Dates to Remember	
May 5	Final date for Dairy Disaster signup
May 26	Memorial Day (office closed)
May 31	Deadline to apply for a Marketing Assistance Loan for 2007 Corn and Soybeans
June 30	Final date to report fall seeded small grains
July 4	Independence Day (office closed)
July 15	Final date to report all other crops
Continues	2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program
Continues	2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program
Continues	Continuous CRP and CREP
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans



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, audiotope, 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, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.