



December 2008

Ottawa County Farm Service Agency News

USDA Service Center Ottawa County FSA

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Websites

www.fsa.usda.gov
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Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Ottawa County Committee

Kirk Haverdink
Wayne Hecksel
Dave Pyle

Ottawa County Advisor

Helen Dietrich

County Executive Director

Blain Becktold

Farm Loan Manager

Leslie Wills, Ottawa and
Muskegon

Farm Loan Program

Technician

Susan McIntosh

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Staff:

Dawn Essenburg
Jackie French
Andy Stille

Field Reporter

Les Kloosterman

2008 FARM BILL EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Hosted by:



The 2008 Farm Bill has 15 titles and significant impact to producers. Like the 2002 Farm Bill, commodity crop producers have a choice to make whether to participate in the new ACRE program or to stay with the old DCP (Direct and Counter Cyclical Payment) Program.

There are new programs that will benefit fruit and vegetable farmers including the new SURE program which is **S**Upplemental **R**Evenue Assistance Payments. **SURE** is targeted to all farm types and provides financial revenue in the triggering event of county declared disaster or if a farm operation has a yield loss greater than 50%. Payments for SURE can be as high as 90% of "expected revenue" depending on crop insurance coverage levels and other factors.

A series of informational meetings will take place in southwestern Michigan, beginning in November and running thru January to help answer questions and explain the farm bill and the new ACRE and SURE programs. The meetings will be offered to the public at no charge, and will take place from 6:30-9:00 pm. Resource people include the local Farm Service Agency County Executive Director and staff along with MSU Extension Educators including Roger Betz, Michigan State University District Extension Farm Management Educator. No registration is required; however, seating may be limited due to the anticipated number of producers interested in learning more about the bill. Please mark your calendar for the nearest location. We hope to see you there!

SESSION LOCATIONS:

*All programs are 6:30-9:00 p.m. at all locations
(Except Newaygo/Muskegon)*

● Dec. 16: Allegan County

Allegan Human Services Bldg., Zimmermann Meeting Room, 3255 122nd Ave., Allegan

● Dec. 18: Ionia County

MSU Extension Office, Conference Room, 50 Sprague Rd., Ionia (new office location – M-66 @ old State Police post across from Wal-Mart)

● Jan. 15, 2009: Newaygo/Muskegon

9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. - Fremont Area Library, 104 E. Main Street, Fremont

● Jan. 29, 2009: Ottawa County

Fillmore Complex, Main Conference Room, 12220 Fillmore St., West Olive

Storage Loans Available

Special low cost government loans for storage facilities are now available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, rice, soybeans and corn. The current interest rate is 3.00% (changes monthly). The 7-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional type cribs or bins, new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures, in addition to bunker storage.



Appointments Recommended

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your arrival. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office.



Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holding to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold 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.

Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes ACRE program payments. Beginning with the 2009 crop year, producers will have the option to participate in a state-level revenue protection program instead of the counter-cyclical program. In crop years 2009 through 2012, producers who make an irrevocable election to receive ACRE Program payments will:

1. Not receive counter-cyclical payments on enrolled farms.
2. Be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.
3. Be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.

If actual state per acre revenue is less than the guarantee and if a producer suffers an actual revenue loss for the crop on the farm, then the producer will receive an ACRE payment equal to the difference between the state per-acre revenue guarantee and the state actual revenue calculation paid on 83.3 percent (85 percent for 2012) of the lesser of acres planted to the covered commodity or total bases acres on the farm.



Supplemental Disaster Assistance Program

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!!! The 2008 Farm Bill appropriated funds for the following Supplemental Disaster Programs: SURE – Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP) Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) For producers to be eligible they must purchase at least the CAT level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for non-insurable crops on **all crops in all counties**.

Many have purchased “Buy In” and will be eligible for 2008. Now is the time to ensure eligibility for 2009. 1st thing to do is to visit your insurance agent and get insurance for all of your “Insurable” crops; then contact FSA to purchase coverage on your “Non-insurable” crops with a “NAP” policy. *New rules allow crops of less than 10% of economic significance to waive the requirement to purchase insurance. These crops would not be covered by SURE. There are also special provisions for producers that are beginning farmers, limited resource, or socially disadvantaged.

Contact either office for more details as information on this program is still evolving. Please note **ALL** crops in **ALL** counties must be covered or waived to qualify for 2009 assistance. For a SURE Calculator go to: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing> under the *Tools* section.



Non Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

NAP policy holders are reminded that they must submit form FSA-576 “Notice of Loss” within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop might be light due to the frosts or hail that we had this spring, contact the office so that we have the opportunity to take a look at your crop. For those of you that have filed a notice of loss, you need to keep us informed of your harvest decisions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of the acreage, an appraisal will need to be completed on the un-harvested acreage. If your loss is on a hand harvested or U-pick crop, this must be appraised even if all is harvested. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim. Remember we need to know the amount of crop sold from previous years in order to

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PEACE TO
YOU AND
YOURS

establish your actual production history (APH). Your APH is used to calculate your loss payment. This production evidence must have been supplied to this office by July 15th.

New 2009 NAP rates will increase to \$250.00 per crop, \$750.00 per county, and \$1,875.00 per producer for all counties.

2008 County Committee Election Results

The County Office would like to congratulate David Pyle as the committee elect for Local Administrative Area 2 for the 2008 County Committee (COC) election race. This is Dave's second term on the committee.

Payment Limitation and Eligibility

For 2009 average Adjusted Gross Income, (AGI) limits have changed.

Restrictions are as follows:

- Non Farm AGI greater than \$500,000, no eligibility for price support or DCP.
- Farm AGI greater than \$750,000, no eligibility for direct payments for DCP.
- If AGI is greater than \$1 million, no eligibility for conservation programs unless 66.66% is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations
- Non Farm AGI greater than \$1 million, no eligibility for conservation program benefits

Payment Limitation Controls will be established in 2009 which will credit individuals and entities with both the amount of payments they receive directly and also the amount they are considered to have received indirectly by holding an interest in an entity receiving payment.

New AGI forms and Farm Operating Plans will have to be filed accordingly.

Production Records

It is important and your responsibility to maintain and provide acceptable production records for eligibility in many of our programs such as SURE, ACRE, and NAP.

Ideal records would be verifiable by CCC through an independent source, be dated, show disposition with quantity and price, and be crop specific. If verifiable records are not available, reliable records may be acceptable. Pick records, register tapes, and ledgers of income are some examples of reliable records.

You should also provide a clear and concise summary of your production records and make sure it notes the unit of measure being used.

Pork Checkoff Program Request for Referendum

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will conduct a "request for referendum" 12/08/08 through 01/02/09 among eligible hog producers and importers of pork and swine to determine if they want a referendum scheduled to determine if the national pork checkoff should be continued or recalled (terminated). The Farm Service Agency County Offices will assist in conducting the Pork Checkoff Program Request for Referendum.

Participation in the request is open to only those eligible parties who desire a referendum, and eligible parties who do not desire a referendum should not vote, according to the announcement.

USDA will conduct the referendum if at least 15% of the total number of eligible producers and importers request the referendum. USDA noted that the number of eligible persons totals 69,446, and, therefore, at least 10,417 of those persons will need to request the referendum for there to be one. USDA said eligibility is based on the number of people who were engaged in hog production or importation of pork and swine between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2007 and were at least 18 years old before Dec. 31, 2007.

The Pork Checkoff Request for Referendum form (LS-54-1) may be obtained from their county FSA office in person, by mail, FAX, or telephone. If requested by mail, FAX or telephone, the form will be mailed directly to the requestor, at the address provided. Persons may also obtain LS-54-1 at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms> Click "Pork Program Request for Referendum Information" and Click "Form LS-54-1. LS-54-1 must be completed and signed and returned to the appropriate county office or postmarked by January 2, 2009. The online form will only be available 12/08/08 through 01/09/09.



HAPPY
HOLIDAYS



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 this County Office in person or by phone.

Seeking Nominations for County Committee Advisor

Ottawa County is currently seeking nominations for a minority advisor to the County Committee. The duties of this position include meeting with the Committee members, offering suggestions, and advising on issues that come before them. Anyone interested in the position should submit a short narrative about themselves to their respective FSA office by December 31, 2008. The one year term will become effective March 1, 2009. You may nominate yourself or another person.

2008 Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelts

The final loan availability date to request a marketing assistance loan or LDP for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts is January 31, 2009.

Dates to Remember	
December 2008	Begin 2009 DCP Sign-up/ACRE Program
December 25	Office Closed for the Christmas Holiday
January 1	Office Closed for New Years Day
January 19	Office Closed – Martin Luther King’s birthday
January 31	Final date to request wool/mohair loan or LDP
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
March 31	Final date to request Wheat loan or LDP
May 31	Final to request Corn or Soy-bean Loan or LDP

Visit our Web site at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

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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.