



Brown County Farm Service Agency

January/February 2011

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Hours

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

Office Staff

Kim Kee,
County Executive Director

Bruce Nutsch,
Farm Loan Manager

Linda Kelsey,
Program Technician

Lucinda Schilling,
Program Technician

Barbara Shefferd,
Program Technician

Nancy Hisle,
Field Assistant

County Committee

Douglas Meyer, Chairperson
Douglas Rodvelt, Vice-Chair
Randall Korthanke

Minority Advisor:
Evelyn Lierz

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Election Results Announced

The election for positions on the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee in Brown County has now been completed. The election was accomplished with a ballot listing this year's candidates being mailed to all eligible voters shortly after November 1. December 6 was the deadline for returning completed ballots. Ballots were then counted by the sitting committee members on December 9.

Doug Rodvelt was elected to his 2nd 3-year committee position. We look forward to continuing to work with Doug to serve the farmers and ranchers of Brown County!

Changing Bank Accounts

All FSA payments should be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Acreage Reporting

Filing an accurate acreage report at your local FSA office can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage is acreage that was timely planted with the intent to harvest, but because of disaster related conditions, the crop failed before it could be brought to harvest. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date. Annual acreage reports are required for most Farm Service Agency programs. Annual crop report deadlines vary based on region, crop, permanent vs. annual crop type, NAP or non-NAP crop and fall or winter seeding. Acreage reporting deadline for wheat, barley, oats & rye is May 31, 2011. Deadline for corn, sorghum, soybeans is August 1, 2011.

Foreign Buyers Notification

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. 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.

Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a revenue-based commodity program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill as an alternative to DCP. Sign up for ACRE occurs between October 1 and June 1 each crop year. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to:

- forgo counter-cyclical payments;
- accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments;
- accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm.

Producers who elect ACRE commit to this option through crop year 2012. Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. To elect ACRE for a farm the first year, producers must complete an election form CCC-509 ACRE as well as an enrollment form. The producer must again enroll each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits.

Change in Farming Operation

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office directly or by phone.

CRP - Annual Certification

Before an annual rental payment can be issued, participants must certify to contract compliance using the FSA-578, Report of Acreage, or CCC-817U, Certification of Compliance for CRP.

Direct & Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP)

Signup for the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) Program occurs annually with a June 1 deadline. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through June 1 each year. If you elect the ACRE option, you are committed to this option through 2012, but you are still required to enroll annually by June 1. FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. Each year you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price. The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this online service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at www.eauth.egov.usda followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

Conservation Loans

The Conservation Loan (CL) program will provide farm owners access to credit to implement conservation techniques that will conserve natural resources. Loans are available currently at a 4.5% rate for either 7 or 20 years depending on the security pledged. CL funds can be used to implement conservation practices approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), such as the installation of conservation structures; installation of water conservation measures; establishment or improvement of permanent pastures; implementation of manure management; and the adaptation of other emerging or existing conservation practices, techniques or technologies. Unlike FSA's traditional farm ownership and operating loan programs that are targeted toward smaller and less financially established farmers, eligibility requirements are expanded to permit the agency to provide assistance to some applicants who may be large and financially strong. In fact, for those applicants with a strong financial position, paperwork requirements can be significantly reduced by eliminating the requirement to provide a cash flow and its supplementary documentation. Direct Conservation Loans have loan limits up to \$300,000. Guaranteed Conservation Loans up to \$1,112,000 are available from lenders working with FSA.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE)

As a critical element of the FSA farm safety net, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) provides financial assistance to producers who suffer qualifying losses due to natural disasters. To qualify for SURE requires that producers implement risk management measures by enrolling in either crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) for all crops. SURE evaluates qualifying losses based on total farm revenue, not individual crop losses. Signup for 2009 SURE benefits began January 10 and continues through July 29.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Low cost financing for storage facilities is available for qualifying producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, rice, soybeans, corn, hay, renewable biomass, and cold storage for fruits and vegetables. The low interest rate changes monthly and is based on the rate of interest charged on Treasury Securities of comparable term. Loan terms of 7, 10 and 12 years are available for the purchase and installation of new, eligible storage facilities or permanently affixed drying and handling equipment or for new components used to remodel existing facilities. Eligible facilities include conventional type bins or cribs, new or remanufactured oxygen-limiting upright and bunker silos, new permanently affixed structures suitable for storing hay and renewable biomass, and new cold storage facilities suitable for storing the fruits and vegetables produced by the borrower. Loan limits are up to \$500,000. Loan terms: \$100,000 or less – 7 years; \$100,000.01 - \$250,000 – 7 or 10 years; \$250,000.01 - \$500,000 – 7, 10 or 12 years. Sign-up is continuous, as long as CCC funds are available.

Paper Check Conversion – Over the Counter

Over the next year, Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will move toward an electronic method for processing producer checks. Paper check conversion is the process of converting paper checks presented to FSA or CCC into electronic debits to the producer's bank account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notice posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Dept. of Treasury website for detailed information:

www.pccotc.gov/pccotc/pcc/usingpcc/Legal%20Notices/legal_notices.htm

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

Dates to Remember

1/10/2011	2009 SURE Signup Began
3/31/2011	Deadline to request small grain loan
5/31/2011	Deadline to report small grains and last day to request loan on feed grains
6/1/2011	Final sign up date for DCP and ACRE
8/1/2011	Deadline to report spring seeded crops, CRP & Grass