

ELLSWORTH COUNTY FSA NEWS

February 2008

Ellsworth County FSA Office

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Ellsworth, KS 67439-1623
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Hours: Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



County Committee Members

Frank Toman, Chairperson
Lucas Janzen, Vice Chairperson
Dan Johnson, Member
Karen Grothusen, COC Advisor

The Committee meets the 1st Wednesday of each month

Office Staff

Michael Martin, CED Carmen Homeier, PT Joan Weinhold, PT Alice Soukup, PT Linda Davis, PT

2005 – 2007 Crop Disaster Program

Recent disaster legislation has extended CDP assistance to all crop losses which were covered by crop insurance or the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Previously, crop losses in 2007 were limited to eligible crops planted prior to February 28, 2007 (primarily wheat). So, if producers have already filed for CDP assistance and had qualifying crop losses on spring-planted crops in 2007 (such as corn, milo, soybeans, sunflowers), they should check with FSA to see if additional benefits may be possible. In general, producers file CDP applications for qualifying crop losses in all years, but are paid only for crop losses in the single year (2005, 2006, or 2007) with the highest benefits. CDP benefits are based on the crop loss information downloaded from crop insurance and records at the FSA office regarding NAP losses.

Livestock Disaster Programs

No signup deadline has been established yet for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) or the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP).

--**LIP:** This program provides assistance for livestock deaths caused by an approved natural disaster. Applicants must provide proof of the livestock deaths and that the deaths were caused by conditions approved under existing disaster designations. Drought is not an eligible disaster event for LIP.

--**LCP:** Most livestock producers in Ellsworth County qualify for this program. Under LCP, producers who own or cash-lease eligible livestock can obtain assistance for forage/feed losses and/or additional feed costs resulting from an approved natural disaster. Most LCP applications received to date reflect significant grass pasture losses due to severe drought conditions in 2005 or 2006. To file for LCP, producers should contact the FSA office that handles their farm records and have documentation of their livestock inventory on January 1, 2005, and January 1, 2006. Pasture locations, stocking rates, supplemental feeding information, etc, must also be recorded. An eligible livestock value will be compared with a pasture forage/feed loss value to determine the LCP payments.

Farm Bill Status

Most farm programs ended on September 30, 2007, with expiration of the 2002 farm law, although some temporary measures were put in place to continue some programs. At this time, the House of Representatives and Senate have both passed legislation regarding federal farm programs. The next step would be to resolve the differences and then forward a single farm bill that could be approved by Congress and the President.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Issues

--**PRESCRIBED BURNS:** Some CRP participants are required to conduct prescribed burns to meet contract

CRP continued...

responsibilities, and other CRP producers want to burn CRP to control volunteer trees or for other reasons. Prescribed burns on CRP acres are permitted from **FEBRUARY 1** through **APRIL 14**, and some cost-share funds may be possible for "optional" burns if requested in advance at the FSA office. Prescribed burns with cost-share make the acreage ineligible for "managed" haying or grazing during the year of the burn. Burning CRP is prohibited from APRIL 15 through JULY 15 since it is the primary nesting period for upland birds.

--**NEW CRP OFFERS:** A "general" CRP signup is not anticipated in the near future. However, CRP signup is on-going (at least until MARCH 15) for "continuous" practices such as waterways, filter strips (next to streams), contour and terrace grass strips, windbreaks, and quail buffers. Many of these practices offer a \$100 per acre signing incentive up front, and higher cost-share and annual rental payments. The only limited acreage allocation at this time is for quail buffers.

--**NEW CRP SEEDINGS:** Producers with new CRP acreage are encouraged to timely establish required covers. If an acceptable cover crop has been approved, native grass seeding can begin as soon as possible and continue through MAY 15, 2008. CRP participants should contact NRCS or FSA personnel about seeding information.

Farm Reconstitutions

--**Recons:** A farm, as defined by FSA, is generally made up of tracts of land that have the same owner and same operator. The sale of a specific tract within a farm would be an instance that FSA would likely require a farm reconstitution to divide the farm. Farm reconstitutions could also involve combining tracts to create new farms. In either case, farm reconstitutions should be requested by JUNE 1. A special "Landowner Designation" method is available to allow farm program bases to be divided in a manner agreed to by all buyers and sellers. This method should be completed in advance of the land transaction and must be requested in writing including the signatures of all buyers and sellers.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

FSA offers seven-year, low-interest loans to grain producers to build new or upgrade existing storage facilities and related essential, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment. Loan opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- New conventional-type cribs or bins, oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures, and flat-type storage structures designed for whole grain storage
- Perforated floors, safety equipment, electrical equipment and concrete components considered essential for a fully functional storage facility
- Remodeling existing storage facilities.

Farm storage facility loans must be approved prior to site preparation, equipment purchase or construction, and must

FSFL continued...

be secured by a promissory note and security agreement. Special provisions apply for loans exceeding \$50,000.

The maximum loan amount will be 85 percent of the net cost of the applicant's needed storage or handling equipment, not to exceed \$100,000 per borrower. A minimum down payment to the supplier or contractor is required to bridge the gap between the net cost of the storage facility and the loan amount. Fixed interest rates on farm storage facility loans are equivalent to the rate of interest charged on U.S. Treasury Securities of comparable maturity on the date the loan is approved. There is a \$45 application fee.

Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Reminders

The last sales closing date for 2008 NAP coverage is **MARCH 17**, which includes sorghum forage and numerous fruits, nuts, and vegetables. The cost is \$100 per crop, not to exceed \$300 per county or \$900 for multi-county interests. Producers with NAP coverage are reminded that good record keeping and disaster reporting is required. Producers should discuss the requirements for acceptable production evidence with FSA personnel.

NAP Exclusion Cage Locations Needed

Each year, the Ellsworth County Committee must determine grazing losses on Native Grass Grazing for the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP). The Farm Service Agency along with the Natural Resource Conservation Service is seeking people who would allow us to use a location in their pasture to set up the exclusion cages.

The cages consist of two cattle panels wired together in the shape of a circle. Basically, the cage keeps the cattle from grazing the grass so the production can be clipped and weighed. From the clippings, the County Committee can assign a grazing loss, if applicable, for the 2008 grazing season on Native Grass. If you are interested, please contact us.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, contact the FSA office – Phone: 785-472-3161.

CCC-1099 G Payment Information

Producers should have received their 2007 farm program payment information on form CCC-1099G. Producers should be aware that **refunds** no longer appear on form CCC-1099G. Contact the FSA office if you have questions.

FSA Guaranteed Loans

FSA guaranteed loans provide lenders (e.g., banks, Farm Credit System institutions, credit unions) with a guarantee of up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Farmers and ranchers apply to an agricultural lender, which then arranges for the guarantee. The FSA guarantee permits lenders to make agricultural credit available to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. More information regarding FSA guaranteed loans can be obtained from the Ellsworth County FSA Office, the Farm Loan Program office in Salina, 785-825-8269, or by visiting www.fsa.usda.gov.

2008 Acreage Reports

With farm law still being developed, JUNE 2, 2008, will likely be the deadline to timely file acreage reports for 2008-crop wheat, **oats**, and barley. Most farm operators have already reported their wheat acres, and we encourage others to report by MARCH 15 if possible. FSA measurement services using GPS equipment are available at established costs if you are unsure of your acreage.

Full Time CED on Duty

With recent office consolidations closing eight FSA offices across Kansas, efforts are being made to end shared management. After serving nearly nine years as the County Executive Director (CED) for both Lincoln County and Ellsworth County, Bill Wineinger has returned as the full-time CED in Lincoln County. The Ellsworth County FSA Committee hired Michael Martin as their CED. Michael started his duties as CED in November of 2007 in Ellsworth.

Foreign Land Ownership

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires any foreign investor who buys, sells, or transfers agricultural land to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days.

2007 Commodity Loan Deadlines

MARCH 31 is the final date to request commodity loans for 2007-crop wheat, oats, and barley. JUNE 2 is the same deadline for 2007-crop grain sorghum (milo), corn, soybeans, and sunflowers.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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