



Ellsworth County Farm Service Agency

February 2011

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

Office Staff:

Michael Martin,
County Executive Director
Linda Davis,
Program Technician
Carmen Homeier,
Program Technician
Alice Soukup,
Program Technician
Joan Weinhold,
Program Technician

County Committee:

Stanton Janssen,
Chairman
Frank Toman,
Vice-chairman
Karen Grothusen,
Voting Member

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Acreage Reporting:

May 31, 2011 is the deadline to report small grain acreage without penalty. The annual requirement of reporting acreage to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented from planting acreage can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland and intended uses, whether idle or planted.

All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP), Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE), marketing assistance loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs). For the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

To maintain eligibility for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), producers must report all crops in all counties in which they have an ownership share or risk. This includes crops on both cropland and/or non-cropland, including native or improved grass that will be mechanically harvested or grazed.

County Committee Election Results:

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee (COC) election ballots, cast from voters in Local Administrative Areas (LAA) #2 and #3, were recently counted resulting in the following positions.

In LAA #2, Karen Grothusen received the most votes and was elected to serve a two-year term on the Ellsworth County FSA Committee. There was no alternate COC member elected. LAA #2 consists of the following townships: Garfield (14-7), Mulberry (14-6), Ellsworth (15-8), Clear Creek (15-7), Carneiro (15-6), West Empire (16-7), East Empire (16-6), Trivoli (17-7), and Langley (17-6).

In LAA #3, Stanton Janssen received the most votes and was elected to serve a three-year term. Dan Johnson was elected to serve as an alternate COC member. LAA #3 consists of the following townships: Palacky (16-10), Lincoln (16-9), Ash Creek (16-8), Valley (17-10), Green Garden (17-9), and Thomas (17-8).

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 FSA office.

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.

FARM LOAN PROGRAMS

Beginning Farmer Loans:

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- 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 percent of the county's average size. Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements.

Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at the local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Rural Youth Loans:

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA, and other agricultural groups.

Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Stop by or call the FSA for more information. You may also contact the Farm Loan Programs team in Salina at 785-825-8269

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.

2009 SURE Program signup:

Signup for the 2009 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program started on January 10, 2011. SURE is one of five disaster programs included in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) that provides assistance to farmers and ranchers who have suffered losses due to natural disasters.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm must have:

- At least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance
- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops
- Been physically located in a county that was declared as a primary disaster county or contiguous county by Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster.

For the 2009 crop year, Rice County received a Secretarial Disaster Designation, number S2924, for crop losses resulting from high winds and hail during a period from 7/17/09 thru 9/3/09. Ellsworth County is contiguous to Rice County so Ellsworth County will meet the eligibility criteria for Disaster Designation location. Producers will still need to meet the 10 percent loss threshold and meet the risk management purchase requirement for economically significant crops.

Sorghum Checkoff Referendum:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has finalized procedures for the referendum on the continuation of the Sorghum Checkoff Program and is announcing the dates it will conduct the referendum. USDA will conduct the referendum February 1 – 28, 2011, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices for producers and the Agricultural Marketing Service office, referenced below, for importers, or via the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage.

For the program to continue, the Sorghum Promotion, Research, and Information order requires that a referendum be conducted no later than 3 years after the start of the assessments, which began on July 1, 2008. The order requires a simple majority vote in the referendum for the program to continue.

Any eligible person engaged in the production or importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide documentation such as a sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum.

Wind energy & CRP contract acres

Wind energy is continuing to grow and expand. As other wind development companies look at Ellsworth County land as a possible future wind farm sight, there are things that landowners should know if that land is enrolled in an active contract under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

When land is enrolled in CRP, there are certain restrictions placed on that land for the life of the contract. When land is under an active CRP-1 (contract), it is basically under a lease for the duration of the contract. Obviously, the landowner still owns the land, but by agreeing to install and maintain conservation practices as indicated in the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) and receive CRP rental payments, landowners/operators are agreeing to abide by the rules and regulations of the CRP program. The rules and regulations restrict what type of activities may be completed or performed on CRP acres.

Windmills, wind turbines, wind-monitoring towers, or other wind powered generation equipment on CRP acreage may be authorized on a case-by-case basis. Approval for installation of such devices shall be requested and approved before any such activity takes place on CRP acres. If such structures are constructed before FSA approval, participants could face monetary penalties including liquidated damages plus interest or even contract termination which shall result in a refund of all CRP payments plus interest and liquidated damages.

FSA may approve up to 5.0 acres per contract of wind turbines on CRP acreage provided the environmental impacts have been considered. The environmental impact review for FSA involves using form FSA-850 and is a separate process compared to the environmental impact assessment that the wind development companies have completed. Access roads, transformers, and other ancillary equipment will not be considered in calculating the 5.0 acre threshold; only the actual footprint of the turbine is considered in calculating the 5.0 acres. A refund shall apply for acreage terminated for access roads, transformers, and other ancillary equipment. Any CRP cover that is damaged during the process of installation of any such wind structures must be reseeded and replaced to the approved CRP cover.

CRP participants should always contact FSA before considering any activity on land enrolled in CRP.

Dates to Remember	
Date	What
Feb. 21	Federal Holiday – Office closed
March 31	Last day for 2010 crop year small grain loan/LDP
May 30	Federal Holiday - Office closed
May 31	Last day for 2010 crop year feed grain and/or oilseeds loan/LDP
May 31	Last date to timely certify 2011 small grains
June 1	Last date to sign up for DCP/ACRE program