



ALLEGAN County News

Allegan County USDA Service Center

Allegan County FSA
1668 Lincoln Road
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-6940(phone)
269-673-9671(fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours

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

County Committee

Jeffry Lenhart
Frank Doezema
Paul Collier

County Committee
Advisor - Lori Drozd

County Committee meets:

The first Wednesday of
each month

Staff

County Executive Director
David J Mroczek

Penny Andrews
Brenda Carroll
Janis Chestnut
Joel Walen

DCP PROGRAM SIGN-UP

Enrollment in the (Direct and Counter Cyclical Program) DCP for the 2009 contract period was scheduled to end on June 1; 2009. This deadline has been extended to August 14, 2009. Payment rates are unchanged from 2008 however the payment acres have been reduced from 85% of the crop acreage base to 83.3% of the base. A 22% advance payment will be offered. If an advance pmt is requested prior to July 1st a cash rent agreement must be provided. This agreement must include year or years rented, cropland, location and owner and operator signatures. Those producers who want to wait until after July 1st to receive their advance payment do not have to get cash rental agreements on farms they had in 2008. Please note that on first time rented farms a cash rent agreement must be provided.



TIMELY FILING LOSSES FOR NAP

CCC-576 Notice of Loss is required on for any NAP crop in which you may have a low yield or prevented planting. You are required to file form CCC-576 within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster event or at the latest within 15 days of when the losses become apparent. There are no late filed provisions. A farm visit will be conducted to evaluate any potential losses and conduct any necessary appraisals.

THE ACRE PROGRAM

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill that begins in crop year 2009. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. 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. ACRE payments are made when both state- and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. ACRE sign-up dates will be from April 27th, 2009 through August 14th, 2009. Those producers already signed up into the DCP Program will be allowed to switch into the ACRE Program. Producers enroll in ACRE on a per farm number basis in any year beginning with 2009 through 2012. A decision to elect ACRE binds the farm to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Farm Bill. For more details contact our office.



BANKING CHANGES

If you have changed banks and not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account. If we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify this office if you close your account, change account numbers or if another financial institution purchases your bank.



Farm Storage Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) provides low interest financing for producers to build new farm storage handling facilities including bins, silo's, flat storage, electric and safety equipment, concrete aprons, pads and pits, permanently affixed drying and handling equipment. Renovation of existing farm storage is allowed under certain circumstances.

The maximum loan amount is \$100,000. For loans that exceed \$50,000 the borrower must provide one of the following: a first lien on the real estate where the facility is located, a lien on other real estate provided it can secure the loan or a letter of credit from a financial institution in an amount sufficient to protect CCC's interest. A 15% down payment is required thus CCC's loan is limited to 85% of the net cost.

The loan term is 7 years. The interest rate is fixed Note: Used bins, portable dryers, scales and facilities for commercial uses are not eligible. Interest rates are very low. 2.375% for May. Please call with any questions.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs including but not limited to: DCP, CRP, NAP & Commodity Loans. Important to remember is that acreage reported to Federal Crop Insurance and the FSA Office must match.

The deadline to report crop acreage is June 30th, 2009 for fall seeded small grains and July 15th, 2009 for all other crops. Please call the FSA Office for an appointment as soon as your crops are planted.

For producers enrolled in the NAP Program, acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30, 2009 for fall seeded small grains and July 15, 2009 for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest of the specific crop acreage being reported whichever is earlier.



NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date. 2008 production records must be turned in before you begin harvest of 2009 crops in order for it to be counted in your yield history.

Payment Limits & Direct Attribution

For commodity and disaster programs under the new farm bill, the AGI limitation was reduced from \$2.5 million from all sources to a three-year average. A person or entity shall not be eligible for price support, commodity, and disaster programs if the non-farm AGI exceeds a 3 year average AGI of \$500,000. Also, under the new regulations, an individual or entity must have a 3-year average AGI less than or equal to \$750,000 per year from farm income in order to qualify for direct payments issued under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program. For conservation programs, the average nonfarm AGI limitation is \$1 million or less for eligibility. However, an individual or entity who has non-farm AGI in excess of \$1 million remains eligible for conservation programs only if 66.66 percent or more of the total AGI is derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations. In addition, the AGI limitation for conservation programs may be waived on a case-by-case basis if it is determined that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected.

Program payments are limited by direct attribution to individuals or entities. A legal entity is defined as an entity created under Federal or State law that owns land or an agricultural commodity, product or livestock. Through direct attribution, payment limitation is based on the total payments received by the individual, both directly and indirectly. Qualifying spouses are eligible to be considered separate persons for payment limitation purposes, rather than being automatically combined under one limitation. Individuals and entities must be "actively engaged in farming" with respect to a farming operation in order to be eligible for specified payments and benefits. To be "actively engaged in farming," the individual or entity must make significant contributions to the farming operation of: (1) capital, equipment, land, or a combination; and (2) personal labor or active personal management, or a combination.

For more detailed information contact our office.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

We would like to congratulate Paul Collier on being elected to serve as Regular Member on the Allegan County Committee. The positions are held by Jeffry Lenhart, Chairman and Frank Doezema, Vice-Chairman. The newly appointed advisor to the County Committee is Lori Drozd. FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.



MILK PAYMENTS

Due to low milk prices FSA will begin making payments in April to producers through FSA's Milk Income Loss Contract program. FSA makes MILC payments on a monthly basis when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt) as adjusted for feed costs. The monthly Boston price is posted online at: http://www.fmmone.com/Northeast_Order_Prices/NE_Prices_mainnew.htm#Advance. The price paid for March will be \$2.005 per cwt.

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. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

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.

DCP/ACRE "10-Acre" Rule

Farms with 10 or less base acres are ineligible to receive payment in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, unless the farm is 50% owned by a Socially Disadvantaged or Limited Resource Producer. However, program rules for 2009 allow farms with 10 or less base acres to combine with other farms to qualify for a DCP payment. In this instance, farm reconstitution rules apply.

Unauthorized Disposition

Loan grain is not to be disposed of through feeding, selling, or any other means without prior written authorization. The financial penalties for this are severe. Always call the office before any loan grain is fed or sold.

Controlled Substance

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

CRP MID MANAGEMENT REQUIRED

Effective May 12, 2002 all new CRP General Sign-up, Continuous CRP, and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts are required to perform management activities as part of their approved conservation plan. Participants with contracts that were approved prior to May 12, 2002, may have their conservation plan revised to include mid-contract management practices and be eligible for cost share for those practices.

Mid-Contract Management of CRP acreage is distinct and separate from maintenance. Maintenance of CRP cover is required if untreated pests (weeds, insects, brush, tress etc.), pose a threat to the existing planted cover, are adversely impacting non-CRP acreage, or if the planted cover is no longer providing erosion control. Most CRP practices receive an annual maintenance rate that is paid to participants to off-set the costs of required maintenance. Contact your local FSA Service Center for detailed information on Mid-Contract Management Practice options.

The following management activities are available for management of CRP INTRODUCED GRASSES AND LEGUMES (brome grass, timothy grass, clover, alfalfa, etc.): PRESCRIBED BURNING, LIGHT DISKING, GRASS SPECIFIC HERBICIDES, and/or INTERSEEDING INTRODUCED LEGUMES.

For CRP NATIVE GRASSES (little and big bluestem, switchgrass, Indian grass, etc.) and WILDFLOWERS:PRESCRIBED BURNING, LIGHT DISKING, GRASS SPECIFIC HERBICIDES, and/or INTERSEEDING NATIVE WILDFLOWERS, are the available allowable management activities.



REMINDER: Sodbuster/Swampbuster rules of the Farm Bill prohibit persons who receive USDA benefits from bringing new highly erodible lands into crop production without a preapproved conservation plan/system or from converting wetlands into croplable acreage.



FARM CHANGES

Please notify our office well in advance of your DCP appointment of any changes in farms that need to be added as well as any that you are no longer working. Changes do not update until the following day. For your farm listing to be correct when you sign up or certify please tell us those changes now. This includes changes to LLC's, partnerships and Corporations.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers

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 that 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.

Dates to Remember	
June 30 th	Final date to report acreage of small grains.
July 15 th	Final date to report acreage of all other crops.
Earlier of July 15 th or 15 days prior to the onset of harvest	Final date to report acreage of crops with a NAP contract.
August 14 th	Final date to enroll in DCP & ACRE
Monthly	Submit milk marketing's If enrolled in the milk program
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

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

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, audiotape, 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, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.