

April 2014



NEWSLETTER



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Alpena, Alcona, and Montmorency County FSA Office

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County Committee Members:
Daniel Smolinski, Chairman
Kevin Small, Vice -Chairman
Janice Emerick, Member
Todd Ableidinger, Member
Jeremy Werth, Member
Louella Byelich, Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting: tentatively scheduled for June 18, 2014, at 10:00 AM

USDA'S Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill; or for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print, our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

AskFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then Ask FSA at askfsa.custhelp.com.

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

Through AskFSA you can:

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

AskFSA is FSA's self-service assistance anytime, anywhere!

Begin Preparing for the New Farm Bill

In light of the new 2014 Farm Bill approved on February 7, 2014, new farm programs are beginning to take shape here at FSA. Updated program information is being relayed to FSA county offices as it becomes available. Being at the forefront of new programs, it is important to have your farm records updated **NOW**. The time to begin preparing and updating records needs to begin today before you get too busy planting. Waiting to report farm changes at the time of enrollment into an authorized program will cause delays. We encourage you to come visit us now to report these (and other) changes.

Changes required to be reported are:

- Operator changes (i.e. changing to a corporation, LLC, partnership, etc.)
- Landowner changes (need name/address of new owner)
- Cropland//Field Boundary changes (i.e. buildings put up on cropland, removed fencerows, cleared trees??)
- Land sales (i.e. buy or sell property??)
- Land rental agreement changes (i.e. add or drop rented land??)
- Bank account changes

A copy of the deed, recorded land contract, or lease is required to make these changes and maintain accurate records. If changing to a corporation or LLC, please provide your local County Office with articles of incorporation &/or bylaws in order to determine proper eligibility.

DO NOT WAIT until acreage reporting to make these changes; please call the FSA County Office for an appointment to report these changes now.

2014 MILC Program

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced the extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which protects dairy farmers against income loss through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers (MPP) is operational.

Contracts for eligible producers enrolled in MILC on or before Sept. 30, 2013, are automatically extended until the termination date of the MILC program. Dairy operations with approved MILC contracts will continue to receive monthly payments if a payment rate is in effect.

MILC compensates enrolled dairy producers when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt), after adjustment for the cost of dairy feed rations. MILC payments are calculated each month using the latest milk price and feed cost, just as in the 2008 Farm Bill. The payment rate for milk marketed from October-2013 through January-2014 is zero. Payment rates for the months after January 2014, until the termination of the MILC program, will be determined as the appropriate data becomes available.

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Producers who want to select a different production start month must visit their local FSA County Office between April 14, 2014, and May 30, 2014.

FSA will provide producers with information on program requirements, updates and sign-ups as the information becomes available.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-Up Began April 15, 2014

The USDA Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters occurring on or after October 1, 2011. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program.

Eligible trees, bushes and vines are those from which an annual crop is produced for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- Have suffered qualifying tree, bush or vine losses in excess of 15 percent (adjusted for normal mortality) from an eligible natural disaster for the individual stand;
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes and vines when the natural disaster occurred. Eligible growers are not required to own the land on which eligible trees, bushes and vines are planted;
- Replace eligible trees, bushes and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

For more information on TAP, please call or stop by the FSA County Office.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Program Enrollment Underway

The 2014 Farm Bill, formally known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, makes the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) permanent programs and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to October 1, 2011.

LFP provides compensation to eligible producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought and fire. LIP provides compensation to livestock producers who suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the Federal government or protected by Federal law, including wolves and avian predators.

Producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases, if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

Fact sheets on these programs can be found by clicking on the following link: [LIP and LFP Fact Sheets](#). If you have

further questions or would like an application, please contact us.

USDA Sets Date for Soybean Request for Referendum

USDA will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act).

Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate. To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation showing they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from FSA County Offices starting on May 5, 2014 through May 30, 2014. Forms are also available on the [AMS website](#). Producers who don't participate in FSA programs can still request a referendum at the FSA County Office where they own or rent land.

Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA County Office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014. If returned by mail, it must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Notice of the Request for Referendum will be published in the March 4, 2014, Federal Register. For more information, visit the [AMS website](#) or contact James Brow, Research and Promotions Branch; Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0251 - Room 2610-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; tel. (202) 720-0633.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche, and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community-supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season; essential tools; irrigation; and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000.00, or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

For additional information, please contact Betty Garrett, Farm Loan Manager, at (989) 356-3596, ext. 2.

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 \$5000.00.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the FSA County Office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).