

February 2014



- Antrim and Otsego County are Eligible for Emergency Loans
- Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP)
- Farm Operation Changes
- Conservation Reserve Program - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Antrim/Otsego County FSA Updates

Antrim/Otsego County FSA Office

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County Executive Director:

Kathy Y Kozlowski

Program Technicians:

Kathy B Johnson
Kari E Tipton

County Committee (COC):

Roger Bolhuis, Chairman
John Makarewicz, Vice Chair
Anthony Prusakiewicz,
Member
Daniel Slivinski, Member
Kevin Bary, Member
Deborah Milbocker, Advisor

Farm Loan Manager:

James Monroe
231-941-0951

Farm Loan Program Technician:

Caleb Boge

**Next County Committee
Meeting: April 4, 2014* at
9:30 a.m.**

(*subject to change)

Antrim and Otsego County are Eligible for Emergency Loans

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides (EM) emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, and other natural disasters. Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property;
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;
- Pay essential family living expenses;
- Reorganize the farming operation and;
- Refinance certain debts.
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Secretarial Disaster Designation S3636

Effective January 23, 2014, 10 Michigan counties, including Antrim and Otsego counties, were designated as natural disaster areas due to losses caused by the combined effects of excessive rain occurring April 1, 2013 through July 29, 2013, returning October 15, 2013 and continuing. Also included in this designation are eligible losses due to the drought that occurred from July 30, 2013 through October 15, 2013 along with cooler than normal temperatures that spanned the entire disaster period.

The disaster designation makes qualified farm operators in the disaster counties eligible for the Farm Service Agency's low-interest Emergency loans. To be eligible for an Emergency loan a farmer must have suffered a 30% loss of production from the disaster as well as meeting other eligibility requirements.

Emergency loan applications will be received through September 23, 2014 for these designations, and applications pending on this date may be processed and completed.

Farmers who want to apply for an Emergency loan should contact their local FSA office, or the Farm Loan Program staff at the Traverse City USDA Service Center at 1501 South Cass Traverse City MI 49684 or call 231-941-0951 extension 109.

Information about farm loans and loan application forms are also available on-line at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=landing>

Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop. To remain eligible for NAP assistance, crop acreage must be reported annually. Failure to report acreage and production information may result in reduced or zero NAP assistance. Be aware that acreage reporting and final planting dates vary by crop and by region. Producers should contact the FSA office where their farm records are maintained for questions regarding local acreage reporting and final planting dates.

Application for Coverage

March 15, 2014 is the last day for producers to apply for coverage on 2014 Spring planted crops using Form CCC-471, Application for Coverage, and pay the service fee at the FSA county office. The application and service fee must be filed by March 15, the deadline date for 2014 spring planted crops.

The service fee applied to the program is \$250 per crop per county, or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

Production

Production records for all 2013 NAP covered crops must be reported to FSA no later than the latest acreage reporting deadline for the state which is August 15, 2014. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verifiable according to Agency specifications.

Reporting Nap Losses

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 Notice of Loss in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster, or when losses become apparent.

The CCC-576 Notice of Loss is used to report low yield, failed acreage and prevented planting, and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all Nap covered crops including grasses.

FSA reminds producers who are first-time NAP participants with coverage for the 2014 crop year of production and reporting requirements. These producers need to submit a minimum of four, up to ten years of production in order to establish their 2014 approved yield.

More information about NAP may be found on the FSA website located at www.fsa.usda.gov

Farm Operation Changes

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchase property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to do so can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

Conservation Reserve Program - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Owners and operators of cropland, orchards, and vineyards in Antrim County may enroll eligible land in a continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice called SAFE which creates a native pollinator habitat planting that consists of native shrubs, grasses and/or wildflowers providing cover, nectar, and pollen for native

pollinators. Sign-up for SAFE is continuous until 2,500 acres are enrolled in the target area. Interested producers submit offers to enroll acres in CRP contracts for a 10-15 year period, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

To be eligible for this SAFE practice the land must have a cropping history of 4 out of 6 years from 2002-2007, or be land capable of growing an annual agricultural commodity that is part of an orchard/vineyard/perennial fruit producing area. To participate in the pollinator habitat sign-up, landowners must convert a minimum of 2 acres to habitat with the plot being at least 100-feet wide. Exception: if part of a working tract that contains an orchard, vineyard or other perennial fruit producing crop, the 2 acre minimum can be realized through multiple plantings of not less than .25 acre with a minimum width of 20 feet.

The program requires that practices under SAFE be managed during the life of the contract. The management requirements are tailored to the individual practice. Fishing and hunting are allowed on CRP-enrolled land, including SAFE. As with other conservation practices and programs under CRP, certain restrictions apply.

If you are interested in enrolling or finding out more about the CRP-SAFE program or other Conservation Reserve Program practices, please contact the Antrim/Otsego Farm Service Agency at (231) 533-8542 Ext. 2.

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).