



NEWSLETTER



February 2014

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Baraga Area FSA Office

16403 Ojibwa
Industrial Park Rd
Baraga MI
49908 9085

906 353 8225 phone
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Executive
Director**
Susan DeVoe

Program Technician
Tammy Clisch

Farm Loan Manager
Bruce Stephenson

County Committee
Brenda Turunen
Bruce King
Butch Semmerling
Gary Palosaari
Glenn Longtin

**Next County
Committee Meeting:**
To be scheduled then
announced

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

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.

NAP Application for Coverage Deadline

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 the March 15th deadline. 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.

Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method - the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method – may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method - the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method - the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Contact the county office for more information concerning recons and changes that may be needed in your farming operation.

FSA SIGNATURE POLICY

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities

APPEAL PROCESS

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

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.

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