



Branch County News

December 2009

Issue No. 3

Branch County FSA

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County Committee

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Staff

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HOURS

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

FSA Website
www.fsa.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi



COC Election

COC ballots were mailed in November to eligible voters in LAA2 (Girard, Butler, Quincy, Algansee and California townships). These ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on December 7th or if mailed postmarked by this date.

The position is currently held by Neil Carpenter, but due to term limits is not able to run again.



**We want to thank Neil for his 9 years
of dedicated service to the
Branch County Farmers!**

2010 DCP Signup

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through June 1, 2010. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract.

USDA computes DCP payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2010, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. USDA will issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2009. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price.

The effective price is the higher of the national average market price received during the 12-

month marketing year for each covered commodity and the national average loan rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity.

The ACRE Option

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For 2010, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3 percent (85 percent in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the State ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

The June 1, 2010, deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

SELLING LAND

If you're planning to sell farmland, there may be some program consequences you should be aware of. For example, if you're planning to sell land that's enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment. If the buyer doesn't want to continue the CRP contract, you might have to refund all of the payments you've received to date. Reviewing program implications with your local Farm Service Agency staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a prudent precaution.

BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) was established to offer financial assistance for producers or entities with the collection, storage, harvest and transportation (CHST) of eligible material for use in biomass conversion facilities. To receive payment, producers and entities must deliver the material to a qualified Biomass Conversion Facility (BCF) and the biomass material must be listed as an eligible material. Anyone seeking information on the BCAP program, please contact your local FSA County Office.

2009-CROP COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. The loan rates are as follows:

<i>Hard Red Wheat</i>	<i>Soft Red Wheat</i>	<i>Soft White Wheat</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Soybeans</i>
\$2.72/bu	\$1.93/bu	\$2.06/bu	\$1.32/bu	\$1.90/bu	\$5.03/bu

UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF LOAN GRAIN

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call the office before any grain under loan is fed or sold.



WOOL & MOHAIR LOAN & LDP DEADLINE: JAN. 31, 2010

The final date to request a loan or LDP on wool or mohair harvested in 2009 is January 31, 2010. The market price has been below the loan rate (42 cents/lb for ungraded wool), so there has been a loan deficiency payment in effect.

FRAUD LEADS TO DISQUALIFICATION

Producers found to have committed crop insurance fraud are ineligible for a number of programs administered by FSA and CCC. Any person found to have committed fraud will receive a notice and will have an opportunity for a hearing on the record. The person may be disqualified from receiving any benefits under a number of programs for a period of up to 5 years. Other sanctions may also apply.

SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SURE)

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Trade Act of 1974 to create five new disaster programs, collectively referred to as Supplemental Agriculture Disaster Assistance programs. These programs include:

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase at least catastrophic risk protection (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for non-insurable crops under SURE, TAP, LFP, and ELAP.

In the 2008 Farm Bill; in general, the term "farm" means the sum of all crop acreage in all counties that is planted or intended to be planted for harvest by the eligible producer. In the case of aquaculture, the term "farm" means all fish being produced in

all counties that are intended to be harvested for sale by the eligible producer. In the case of honey, the term "farm" means all bees and beehives in all counties that are intended to be harvested for a honey crop by the eligible producer.

Producers who meet the definition of a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher, do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

ACREAGE REPORTS NEEDED FOR SURE

Because of the delay in announcing the provisions of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, producers enrolling in the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) are reminded that 2008 crop reports are required for SURE participation. This includes crops planted on cropland and/or non-cropland, including native pasture or improved grass that will be hayed.

Physical evidence of the crop in the field is not required for Farm Service Agency (FSA) to accept late-filed 2008 acreage reports. However, evidence of existence or disposition, is required.

The following requirements for 2008 SURE include:

- producers **must** report all crops, in all counties, in which they have an interest
- late-filed fees shall be waived for late-filed 2008 acreage reports and physical evidence in the field is not required
- if the actual use of a crop is different from the intended use reported, the producer may report the final use to the County Office; however, the intended use shall **not** be changed.

The provisions noted are for 2008 only. For 2009 and 2010, normal acreage reporting requirements will be applied.

More details on the 2008 SURE Program are available at county FSA offices or on line at www.fsa.usda.gov

OTHER DISASTER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

The 2008 Farm Bill authorized several new disaster programs in addition to SURE. Contact your local FSA County Office for more information and to schedule an appointment to enroll.

- Livestock Incentive Program (LIP). Signup began July 13, 2009.
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). Signup began September 9, 2009.
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). Signup began September 9, 2009.
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP).



CHANGING BANKS

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the Direct Deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

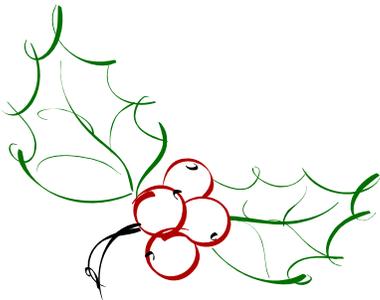
ADVISOR NOMINATIONS

The Branch County COC is now accepting nominations for the COC advisor position. As a non-voting member of the COC, the advisor ensures that all minority producers are treated fairly and the same as all other producers. Anyone who is interested in the position may be nominated by a minority group or themselves. Please send our office the nomination and a biography of the person by January 1, 2010. This is a one year term that is appointed by the State Committee with a recommendation from the COC beginning March 1, 2010.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 BRANCH FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 387 N. Willowbrook Ste. F
 Coldwater, MI 49036

PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 LANSING, MI
 PERMIT NO. 19



We want to wish all of you a very Happy Holidays!

2010 – 2012 Farm Leases

Starting with the 2010 crop year, all leases must include at least the following information:

- Length of lease: multi-year lease must list the number of years
- Owner(s) and operator(s) names printed and signatures
- Signature date
- Type of lease: cash, share, barter, etc.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

December 7	Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to the County Office
December 10	Final date to apply ELAP and LFP for crop year 2008 and 2009 through September 10, 2009
December 25	Christmas Day Holiday – Offices Closed
January 1, 2010	New Year’s Day Holiday – Offices Closed
January 18, 2010	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Holiday – Offices Closed
January 31, 2010	Final Date to Request 2009-Crop Wool and Mohair Loans or LDPs
Ongoing	SAFE Program Enrollment
Ongoing	CRP Continuous Signup
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans

eGOV CUSTOMER REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Access your website of interest:
 - USDA Customer Statement <http://customerstatement.usda.gov>
 - Electronic LDP Signup http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm
 - Electronic DCP Signup http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp_default.htm
2. Create an online user profile and apply for Level 2 access.
3. Respond to the verification email within 7 days of receipt.
4. Visit the County Office in person and provide photo identification to the Local Registration Authority in order to receive Level 2 Activation.
5. Access Level 2 applications within 1 hour after profile has been activated.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact their local County Office in person or by phone.

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.