



# Branch County News

May 2010

Issue No. 1

## Branch County FSA

387 N. Willowbrook, Ste F  
Coldwater, MI 49036  
517-278-2725 ext. 2 (phone)  
517-278-5176 (fax)

## County Committee

Kevin Miller  
Wayne Barnes  
Leon Knirk  
Jill Bucklin, Advisor

## HOURS

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

## FSA Website

[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)  
[www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/mi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi)



## 2010-2012 Leases

Starting with 2010, all leases must include, at a minimum, the following information:

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

## DCP SIGN-UP

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) is underway and will continue through June 1, 2010.

Call to schedule your appointment.

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 advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the calculated direct payment.

**Late-filed applications are NO longer accepted.**

**You must sign up by June 1st.**

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program and can be accessed at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp). To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov>, followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

## Maintenance of DCP/ACRE Program Acres

DCP participants are required to protect all idle contract acres from erosion and weeds. Idle fields designated as "contract acres" must have a sod cover, crop residue, or volunteer grasses. Weeds are not an acceptable cover and must be mowed. Failure to control weeds on contract acres will cost you program benefits if the COC determines that the producer failed to demonstrate a good faith effort to control weeds and/or erosion.



## ACRE PROGRAM SIGNUP

Producers who are eligible for the DCP will also be eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. You may first enroll in the DCP Program, receive advance direct payments, and then later modify your enrollment to include the ACRE Program; or you may wait and elect to enroll in DCP and ACRE at the same time.

**Once ACRE is elected for the farm it will remain enrolled in ACRE for the duration of the 2008 Farm Bill, regardless of owner and/or operator changes. If you enroll a farm in ACRE in 2010, it will be in ACRE through 2012. The decision to enroll in ACRE is irrevocable.**

ACRE provides a safety net based on State revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under the 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. The 2-year price average for the 2010 crop 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% (85% 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 cannot exceed the total base on the farm. A farm participating in ACRE will not receive counter-cyclical payments; the farm's direct payment is reduced by 20%; and the marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30%.

**July 15th is the deadline to provide 2009 production evidence – Don't delay – bring it in today!**

## **CROP REPORTING TIME IS HERE**

The annual reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland acres on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the following programs: DCP, ACRE, Commodity Loans, CRP, SURE and NAP.

### **Deadline to report is as follows:**

Fall Seeded Crops – June 30<sup>th</sup>

All crops other than Fall Seeded – July 15th

**Report All Farm Changes** - Remember to report all farm changes to our office, including land purchases, land sales, death of landowner, change of owner, etc. **We do not receive these updates from the courthouse.**

**Wool & Mohair Deadline** - Don't forget to complete form CCC-633 for your 2010 Wool & Mohair. This form must be on file prior to losing beneficial interest.

**Loan Reminders** - If you have an outstanding marketing assistance loan, make sure you continually monitor the storage structure to make sure it is secure and free of leaks **and** the commodity to make sure it is still in good condition. If you need to move the commodity, or are planning to feed or sell some loan commodity, make sure you request authorization BEFORE you take any action.

**NAP Production Reporting** - Producers enrolled in the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) are required to provide production records for individual crops each year to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information for this and 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 and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. It is recommended producers submit 2009 production records as soon as possible after harvest. All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.

**Actively Engaged** - USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by the FSA.

Every stockholder or member of a legal entity, such as a corporation, does not have to contribute labor or management if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management that altogether qualifies as a significant contribution to the farming operation;
- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members cannot exceed \$40,000.

### **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Provisions - WE CANNOT MAIL THESE FORMS TO YOU!**

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

**Spousal Signatures** - Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. The exception to this is loans. Husbands and wives may not sign loan documents for each other, without a proper power of attorney form on file.

**Power of Attorney** - For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

## **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) Signup**

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that were incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition (crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm)
  
- producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop production or quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sure\\_calculator\\_2008.xls](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sure_calculator_2008.xls). The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and backgrounder are also available online.

**Foreign Landowners Reporting Requirement** - 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% 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.

**Farm Loan Programs** - FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loans (OL) to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Our loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. Producers should contact Russ Lafollette at 517-849-9890 for more information.

**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.

### **2010 County Committee Meeting Schedule:**

All meeting begin at 8:30 a.m. – Subject to Change and Regular Session meetings are open to the public.

<b>May 12</b>	<b>June 9</b>	<b>July 7</b>
<b>August 4</b>	<b>September 1</b>	<b>October 6</b>
<b>November 3</b>	<b>December 8</b>	



**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**

**MUST ENROLL IN FARM PROGRAM (DCP or ACRE) BY JUNE 1<sup>st</sup> – NO LATE FILED ACCEPTED**  
**“See Page Three about the SURE Program”**

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

- May 31** – Office closed in honor of Memorial Day
- June 1** – Final date to enroll in DCP and ACRE
- June 15** – Deadline to submit forms CCC-927-928 to IRS
- June 30** – Final reporting date for fall seeded crops
- July 5 – Office closed in observance of Independence Day
- July 15** – Final date to submit ACRE production evidence
- July 15** – Final reporting date for crops other than fall seeded
- August 1** – Final date to request Reconstitution
  - Ongoing SAFE Program Enrollment
  - Ongoing CRP Continuous Signup
  - Ongoing Farm Storage Facility Loans



**County Office Contact Information:**

DCP/ACRE, Commodity Loans, Farm Storage Facility Loans, or Crop Reporting – **Kelly Gruner**  
 Payment Eligibility, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Power of Attorney, Direct Deposit Information – **Linda Snyder**  
 2008 SURE program (disaster assistance), MILC, Reconstitution of Farms, Property Ownership changes – **Jessica Mobley**

**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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm)
  - Electronic DCP Signup [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp\\_default.htm](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.

4 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.