



# NEWSLETTER



July 2012

## **SEE PAGE 3 ABOUT EMERGENCY HAYING AND GRAZING OF CRP GROUND**

### **Branch County FSA Office**

**Hope R. Gentile**  
County Executive  
Director  
387 N. Willowbrook  
Suite F  
Coldwater, MI 49036

517-278-2725 phone  
517-278-5176 fax  
www.fsa.usda.gov/MI

**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### **County Staff**

**Program  
Technicians:**  
Shelly Dickinson, PT  
Kelly Gruner, PT  
Jessica Mobley, PT  
Linda Snyder, PT

**Farm Loan Staff:**  
Russ Lafollete,  
Farm Loan Manager  
Crystal Hepker, Loan  
Officer  
Program Technician  
Debra Wheeler  
Joann VanDeusen

517-849-9890 phone

### **FSA COC Nomination Deadline**

County committees (COC) play a crucial role in helping county office staff implement the Farm Bill. Due to the important services that COC members provide, producers are encouraged to participate in the FSA county committee election process by nominating an eligible candidate by the Aug. 1, 2012, deadline.

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are more than 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to five members who are elected by eligible local producers.

### **Special Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements

### **Successor-In-Interest**

Many FSA programs will allow payments to be made to heirs or successors when a program participant passes away. Additionally, contracts in programs such as CRP must be revised to reflect the successor(s) to a deceased participant's interest.

In the event of an FSA program participant's death, it is important that FSA be notified. Entities and joint operations that participate in FSA programs also need to notify FSA if a shareholder or member passes away. FSA benefits are reported to IRS and maintaining current, accurate records about participants is vital to ensuring that those payments are reported correctly.

### **Compliance**

Compliance and spot checks will be utilized during the 2012 crop year. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans, etc. for spot check and review, a nationwide selection of producers is used to achieve a statistical sampling of participating producers. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in the Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program, etc.

State and county offices shall view and print their producer spot check lists as posted on the designated website. If an entity is selected from the national database that is no longer farming or participating in the 2012 crop year, a notation shall be made on the spot check list. For more information about the new spot check selection procedure, feel free to contact your local office for additional clarification.

## Filing for NAP Losses

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report 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 crops including grasses. 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.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

## Disaster Assistance

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind crop and livestock producers that have recently experienced severe damage from flooding, wildfires and tornadoes that FSA programs are available to assist with recovery.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit their local FSA county office so they get a quick start in the recovery process.

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov); click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

## MILC Program

FSA's Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) compensates dairy producers when domestic milk prices fall below a specified level. MILC payments are made when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt) as adjusted by the dairy feed ration adjustment. The monthly Boston price is posted online at:

[http://www.fmmone.com/Northeast\\_Order\\_Prices/NE\\_Prices\\_main\\_new.htm](http://www.fmmone.com/Northeast_Order_Prices/NE_Prices_main_new.htm).

Eligible producers should submit the current MILC (Milk Income Loss Contract) statements for payment. Eligibility for 2012 must be completed before payments can be disbursed. Contact the office to check the status of your eligibility. New producers are encouraged to apply for the program before Sept. 30, 2012.

## Over the Counter Channel (OTCnet)

FSA/CCC is moving toward OTCnet, an electronic method for processing customer check payments. When a check is submitted for payment either in person or through the mail, the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information.

<http://fms.treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>

### What is OTCnet?

OTCnet is a Web-based online application process for converting paper checks presented to FSA into electronic debits to the producer's bank account. It presents many benefits, such as reducing lost/misplaced checks and paper handling. This improves customer relations, speeds the check clearing process, and reduces the potential for human error.

## Banking Changes?

If you changed banks and did not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in a producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

Branch County  
FSA Office  
387 N. Willowbrook  
Ste. F  
Coldwater, MI  
49036



## EMERGENCY HAYING & GRAZING of CRP

As you may have heard on the news, the country is currently experiencing a drought. Because of its severity, the Secretary of Agriculture has opened up specific practices on CRP acres for Emergency Haying and Grazing. Your CRP contract may be eligible.

2012 Emergency Haying starts August 1, 2012 (in Michigan) and ends August 31, 2012.

- shall leave at least 50 percent of each filed or a contiguous field unhayed for wildlife.
- hay must be removed from contract acreage no later than September 15, 2012

2012 Emergency Grazing starts August 1, 2012 (in Michigan) and ends September 30, 2012

- shall leave at least 25 percent of each field or contiguous CRP fields ungrazed for wildlife, or graze not more than 75 percent of the stocking rate determined by NRCS

2012 Emergency Haying or Grazing **requires:**

- a request form signed by everyone listed on the CRP Contract
- a modified Conservation Plan
- written approval from the County Committee
- reporting acres after haying or grazing is completed
- 10% reduction in the annual payment on acres hayed or grazed

Continued from previous column:

An alternative option is Managed Hay and Grazing, and it may be available to you for your CRP acres.

Contact the office today for more information and to see if you might be eligible.

## Foreign Landowner Notification

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 with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## Sign Up for FSA Fence Post for Daily Updates

The Farm Service Agency Fence Post is an online newsletter that is updated on an almost daily basis. It contains articles of interest on the agency's programs and departments, as well as success stories from the field. To access Fence Post visit <http://fsa.blogs.govdelivery.com/>. Producers can sign up for weekly Fence Post updates by putting an email address in box that says "Get Email Updates."

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
Aug. 1	Last Day to file COC nomination form
Aug. 1	Last day to request farm reconstitutions
<b>NEW DATES FOR 2013 CROPS</b>	
October 20, 2012	Deadline to report prevented planted wheat for 2013 crop year
November 15, 2012	Deadline to certify fall-seeded small grains, including winter wheat AND perennial

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.