



Calhoun County News

July 2009

Issue No. 3

**Calhoun County FSA
USDA Service Center**
13464 Preston Dr. Suite 100
Marshall, MI 49068
269-781-4263 ext. 2
269-781-3199 (fax)

Web Sites

www.fsa.usda.gov
www.sc.egov.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

David Bosserd, Chairperson
Keith Lawrence, Vice-Chair
Rita Reincke, Member
Denice Raymond, Advisor

Staff

Kim Bates, Program Tech.
Bonnie Baxter, PT
Georgann Detty PT
Ellen Kiessling, PT
Sandy Williams, PT
Jerry Motz, Field Asst.
Phillip DeYoung, FLM
Elizabeth Lake, CED

Dates to Remember

Aug 3 – County Committee Nomination deadline, LAA#1
Aug 3 – ACRE Informational meeting, Coldwater
Aug 14 – DCP/ACRE enrollment deadline
Aug 14 – Crop Reporting deadline for 2009
Sep 7 – Office closed in observance of Labor Day
Continues – Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues – Continuous Conservation Reserve Program & CRP-SAFE



ACRE Educational Meeting

Informational meetings are being held in the area to help farmers sort out the new **ACRE (Average Crop Revenue Election)** program, which has a 2009 sign up deadline of August 14, 2009. The meeting for Calhoun County is scheduled as follows:

Presenter: Roger Betz
Date: Monday August 3, 2009
Time: 6:30 – 9:30 PM
Place: 4-H Cabin, Branch Co. Fairgrounds,
262 S Sprague St. Coldwater

Resource people in attendance will include representatives from the Branch and Calhoun FSA staff. The meeting will be facilitated by Roger Betz, MSU District Extension Farm Management Educator, who is well versed in the management implication of the ACRE program. Check with FSA for alternate meeting locations and dates.

ACRE Program Details

Beginning with the 2009 crop year, producers will have the option to participate in a state-level revenue protection program instead of the counter/cyclical (CC) portion of DCP. The program is set up per farm number, the same as DCP. Only farms with previously established bases are eligible.

ACRE election is optional and can be made in any of the next 4 years beginning with the 2009 crop year; but once the election is made, the farm will stay in the program through 2012. For 2009, you must enroll your farm by August 14.

Producers who choose to participate in ACRE will:

1. Not receive a CC payment on enrolled farms.
2. Receive a 20 percent reduction in direct payments on enrolled farms.
3. Receive a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates on enrolled farms.

ACRE Program, cont.

ACRE payments are made only if two triggers are met. First, 90% of the state's historical revenue must exceed the current year's state revenue. Second, the farm's historical revenue must exceed the current year's farm revenue (the farm's actual yield times the ACRE Price). If the triggers are met, the producer will be eligible to receive an ACRE payment.

The payment is equal to the difference between the state revenue guarantee and the state actual revenue calculation; times 83.3 percent (85 percent for 2012) of the acres planted on the farm *or* total base acres of the farm, which ever is less; times the productivity index factor (the farm's benchmark yield divided by the state's benchmark yield). A good way to determine if your farm will benefit from the ACRE program is to visit the website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp>. This website has background information, an ACRE calculator, and preliminary program parameters.

Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late filed applications. Signup for the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. This year the payment will be calculated on 83.3% of your base acres. Advance payments of 22% can be requested. Final payments are expected to be processed in October.

Crop Acreage Reports

The deadline to report all 2009 planted and/or considered planted crop acreage has been *extended to August 14, 2009*. All cropland acreage must be reported by the above date to avoid paying a late fee per farm. This includes CRP and NAP. Planting dates are required.

Protection of Crop Base Acres

Producers must protect land enrolled in DCP or the ACRE Program from weeds, including noxious weeds, and erosion. This includes all planted and idle base acres. Suggested covers, if not planted to program crops, include annual, biennial, or perennial grasses and legumes; volunteer stands, other than weeds; and crop residue from using no till or minimum tillage practices.

County Committee Nominations

The Calhoun County FSA is actively seeking nominations of beginning farmers and persons from minority, female, and producers from under-represented groups for nomination to the Calhoun County FSA Committee. For FSA program purposes Calhoun County has been divided into three areas. Each year one area in the county elects a committee member to represent the area for a three-year term.

Nominations are being requested for the area represented by the townships of Bedford, City of Battle Creek, Convis, Emmett, Lee, Marshall and Pennfield. David Bosserd, a farmer from Marshall Township currently represents this area and is eligible to run for another term. The three-year term begins January 1, 2010. To hold office as a County Committee Member, a person must have an interest in a farming operation, be of legal voting age and reside in the area currently accepting nominations and conducting the election. *Nominating petitions will be accepted through August 3, 2009.*



Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Provisions Available Online

NAP basic provisions (BP) are now available as CCC-471 NAP BP. This document provides general information on the NAP process for producers filing a 2009 or later CCC-471. The public may access CCC-471 NAP BP through the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>. After accessing the web site, CLICK “Disaster Assistance Programs.” On the Disaster Assistance Programs Home Page CLICK “View NAP Basic Provisions” located under “I Want To...”

NAP Policy Holders



Producers must file a *Notice of Loss* with their local FSA office within **15 calendar days** from the disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses or the final planting date for prevented planting. The Notice of Loss must be filed for *each* weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence that causes damage to or loss of the specific crop or commodity.

Producers are responsible for providing accurate and complete *Reports of Production* on a timely basis each and every year after harvest. The deadline to **report production is July 15** of the year following harvest. It is the producer’s responsibility to report the total amount of production for their entire unit. It is not FSA’s responsibility to determine the producer’s amount of production.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Cover Maintenance

Attention CRP participants: cover maintenance is your responsibility and must be done according to your conservation plan. Mowing for cosmetic purposes or general weed control is not allowed and will result in financial penalties. Mowing maintenance activities may be allowed once per year, only if it is needed to maintain the approved cover, and only on the portion of CRP in need of maintenance. Mowing is permitted between **August 1st and August 20th** to protect ground nesting wildlife and to allow adequate re-growth for winter cover. **Producers may request permission to perform maintenance activities outside the specified timeframe, but each request has to be approved by the Calhoun County Committee on a case-by-case basis. Plan ahead and contact the FSA office prior to conducting any maintenance on your CRP acres.** Mowing on an annual basis is not an acceptable method of weed and woody growth control. The County Committee has the right to deny maintenance requests if previous mowing has not adequately solved the problem.

Spraying an herbicide may be a viable option, but approval must be requested in writing and granted by the County Committee **BEFORE** you begin the maintenance activity.

Payment Limitation and Eligibility

New forms for 2009 and subsequent years

Anyone that plans to participate in 2009 programs is required to submit a completed CCC-902, CCC-926, and CCC-901, if applicable, for payment eligibility and payment limitation purposes. The form used prior to 2009 was named CCC-502.

Another change for 2009, all must make a contribution in an entity

All partners, stockholders, or members with an ownership interest in the legal entity must make a contribution, whether compensated or **not** compensated, for --*

- active personal labor,
- active personal management,
- or a combination of active personal labor and active personal management to the farming operation;

*Note: there are exceptions for spouses.

Person or Legal Entity Payment Limitations	Limitation (in Dollars)
Program Payment Type	2009/ 2010/ 2011/20012
Commodity Programs	
Counter-cyclical and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE), except peanuts	65,000 <u>1/</u>
Counter-cyclical and Average ACRE payments on peanuts	65,000 <u>1/</u>
Direct payments on covered commodities except peanuts	40,000 <u>2/</u>
Direct payments on peanuts	40,000 <u>2/</u>
Conservation Programs	
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment.	50,000
Cost Conservation Stewardship Program (CSTP) for FY 2009-2012	200,000
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) FY 2009-2012	300,000
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)	50,000
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	50,000
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	50,000
Disaster Assistance Programs	
Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)	100,000
Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	100,000
Tree Assistance Program (TAP)	100,000
Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP); Marketing Assistance Loans; Marketing loan gain (MLG)	No limits

1/ Under ACRE, this amount will be a combined limitation for counter-cyclical and ACRE payments. If a person or legal entity has a direct or indirect interest in payments earned on a farm participating in ACRE, this limitation will reflect an increase for the amount that direct payments are reduced.

2/ If the person or legal entity has a direct or indirect interest in payments earned on a farm that is in ACRE, this limitation will reflect a 20 percent reduction in direct payments on each far that is participating in ACRE.

Additional information on payment limitations is available at FSA county offices or on line at: www.fsa.usda.gov

Sodbuster and Swampbuster Provisions

Most USDA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on highly erodible land planted to an annual crop, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). USDA participants are prohibited from converting wetlands for agricultural production purposes and planting an agricultural commodity on converted wetlands, as determined by NRCS. Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers come into the FSA office ahead of time to file an AD-1026 for referral to NRCS. **It is necessary for NRCS to review any actions which could result in the modification of an area determined wet.** This includes any clearing of trees or brush (including fence rows), draining, dredging, filling, or plans to install, maintain or improve tile.



Spousal Signatures

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for many FSA programs unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. This does not apply to commodity loans, farm loans, or the Loan Deficiency Program (LDP). Spouses must have an FSA-211 on file to sign commodity loan documents or LDP applications on behalf of each other.



Privacy Information Changes

The farm bill legislation provides specific protection of owner/operator information. This includes information on bases and yields, acres farmed, and maps with farm and tract numbers. Only owners and operators with valid leases will be able to receive this information. We will not provide this information to others, including realtors, without written consent from you.

Help Prevent Crop Insurance Fraud and Abuse

With the passage of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act 2000, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) are required to coordinate a plan to identify, address, and reconcile discrepancies of all relevant producer-derived information. FSA and RMA are further directed to coordinate a monitoring program, which includes fact finding relative to allegations of Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIC) fraud, waste and abuse. As a key preventative measure, it is important that the agricultural community be made fully aware of FSA's and RMA's joint efforts to reduce fraud, waste and abuse of the FCIC program by the following methods:

- ◆ FSA will be assisting RMA and insurance providers in monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season
- ◆ FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse about the Federal Crop Insurance Program to RMA
- ◆ Producers may report suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to their local FSA County Office, RMA Office, or the Office of the Inspector General
- ◆ FSA will assist RMA with auditing claims.

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.

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please contact Elizabeth Lake at 269-781-4263, ext 2.