



## NOVEMBER 2011

### Calhoun County FSA USDA Service Center

13464 Preston Dr. Ste. 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

Keith Lawrence, Chairperson  
David Bosserd, Vice-Chair  
Beth Korn, Member  
Denice Raymond, Advisor

#### Staff

Kim Odette, Program Tech.  
Bonnie Baxter, PT  
Georgann Detty, PT  
Ellen Kiessling, PT  
Mack Francoeur, FLM  
Elizabeth Lake, CED

#### Dates to Remember

**November 24** – Office closed for Thanksgiving Day  
**December 8** – County Committee Meeting  
**December 26** – Office closed for Christmas  
**January 2** – Office closed for New Year's Day  
**January 16** – Office closed for Martin Luther King Day  
**January 23** – DCP/ACRE sign up starts  
**Continues** – Farm Storage Facility Loans  
**Continues** – Continuous Conservation Reserve Program & CRP-SAFE

**December 1 – Georgann is retiring after over 34 years!**

## DCP/ACRE Sign-up Begins January 23, 2012

Sign-up for the 2012 DCP/ACRE program begins January 23, 2012. The deadline remains June 1, 2012.

Please note that all direct payments will be made in October 2012. NO advance payments will be issued for this program year, although your payment acres will be based on 85% of your contract acres instead of the 83.5% in the previous years.

The county office will be mailing out postcards with your appointment date and time. If you cannot make this time, or have not received a card, please contact the office for an appointment.

DCP was authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill through the 2012 crop year and provides a safety net to producers. DCP payments do not depend on the current production choices of the farmer; instead, they are based on historically-based acreage and yields. Producers on a farm with established base acres may annually enroll the farm in a DCP contract. Depending on the farm's planting history, a farm may have base acres established for one or more of the following covered commodities: barley, corn, grain sorghum (including dual-purpose varieties), oats, soybeans, and wheat. **See page 2 for ACRE information.**

### Annual Payment Limitation

Payments for all FSA farm programs are governed by payment limitation and payment eligibility requirements.

Payment limitations per person for 2012 are \$40,000 for Direct Payments (DCP); \$65,000 for Counter Cyclical Payments (DCP) and ACRE payments; \$50,000 for CRP; no limits for market gains and LDP's; \$100,000 for Disaster Assistance Programs; and \$100,000 for NAP.

## County Committee Elections

**(LAA 3 – Albion, Clarence, Clarendon, Eckford, Homer, Marengo, and Sheridan)**

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area 3 should have received a ballot in the mail recently. Please follow the directions on the ballot and return to this office by December 5, 2011. Ballots will be counted on December 8, 9:00 a.m. in the USDA Service Center conference room. Keith Lawrence, farmer from Eckford Township, currently represents this area and is eligible to run for re-election. Write-in candidates are also acceptable, as long as they are eligible to hold office in LAA 3. To hold office, a person must have an interest in a farming operation, be of legal voting age, and reside in the area conducting the election.

## 2010 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

Signup for the SURE Program for 2010 crop losses began November 14, 2011 and will end June 1, 2012.

SURE is available to eligible producers who meet one of the two requirements:

- 1) Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties, that have incurred at least a 10 percent crop production or quality loss, or both, on ALL crops grown by a producer nationwide, except grazed crops.
- 2) Farms in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

Contact the office if you think you may qualify for this disaster assistance.

## Average Adjusted Gross Income- AGI



The 2008 Farm Bill required the implementation of the AGI limitations for program eligibility for the 2009-2012 program years. The average AGI provisions are applicable to the majority of programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Annual certifications of AGI compliance are required from each individual and legal entity requesting CCC payments either directly or indirectly. Annual certifications and consent are made on form CC-931.

It is recommended that producers submit the completed CCC-931 at the time that payments and benefits are requested under USDA programs which are subject to the average AGI limitations. As required by law, producers must sign the CCC-931 to grant the IRS the authority to provide tax-related information data to USDA.

Producers whose average AGI appear to be in excess of the statutory AGI limitations will be notified in writing of the results, and provided an opportunity to make available within 30 days to the applicable FSA Office, a third-party verification from a certified public accountant or attorney of their AGI that demonstrates the limits have not been exceeded.

Producers determined not to be in compliance with AGI limitation will be offered appeal rights to either FSA or the National Appeals Division. Producers who fail to respond to written notices of AGI non-compliance or are determined non-compliant will be notified of the requirement to refund the applicable program payments. Actions required by the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) will be followed by NRCS and FSA.

## 2012 ACRE Signup

The enrollment period for the 2012 Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) runs from January 23 through June 1, 2012.

The ACRE program provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price. ACRE payments are made when both state and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments, receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments, and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. The decision to elect ACRE binds the farm to the program through the 2012 crop year.

Planted crops considered eligible for ACRE payments include: wheat, barley, oats, grain sorghum, corn, soybeans, and other oilseeds (canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, and sesame seed).

## Fruits / Vegetables on DCP Contracts Acreage – Planting Flexibility

Producers may plant any crop on base acres enrolled in DCP program **except** the following:

- Fruits
- Vegetables, other than lentils, mung beans, and dry peas
- Wild Rice

However, producers may plant fruits, vegetables, and wild rice on base acres enrolled in the DCP program if any of the following apply:

- In a doubling-cropping practice with covered commodities (Michigan is not a double cropping state)
- On a **farm with a history** of planting fruits and vegetables or wild rice, except that direct and counter-cyclical payments shall be reduced by an acre for each acre of base acreage planted to a fruit, vegetable, or wild rice.
- If the **producer has an established history** of planting a specific fruit, specific vegetable, or wild rice, except that:
  1. Such plantings on base acreage cannot exceed the producer's average annual planting history for the specific commodity (specific fruit, specific vegetable, or wild rice) for the 1991 through 1995 or 1998 through 2001 crop years, as determined by the producer, excluding years in which the producer did not plant the specific fruit, specific vegetable or wild rice.
  2. Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments shall be reduced by an acre for each acre of base acreage planted to the specific fruit, specific vegetable, or wild rice.



## **Marketing Assistance Loans**

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically low at harvest time. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth (9) calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. The current interest rate is 1.125%.

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Loan Rate</b>	<b>Final Availability</b>
Corn	\$1.86/bu	May 31, 2012
Soybeans	\$4.93/bu	May 31, 2012
Soft White	\$2.28/bu	April 2, 2012
Soft Red Wht	\$2.17/bu	April 2, 2012
Oats	\$1.38/bu	April 2, 2012



**NOTE:** Loan rates will be reduced 30% for commodities that are grown on farms enrolled in ACRE.

## **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with **Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Provisions** are required. Producers with HEL farms need to be aware of tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan. Contact the USDA Service Center prior to modifying any wetland or drainage ditch (including tiling, draining, dredging, filling, and leveling). Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.



Please note that when a determination is being made on one area of a tract the whole tract will be reviewed and determinations made. You will be notified of the determinations made for the entire tract and will be given 30 days to request reconsideration if you do not agree. If you wait longer than 30 days to review these determinations, you will have lost your right to appeal.

## **FSA Farm Loans**

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.

### **Farm Loan Limits**

The farm bill expanded and enhanced farm loan programs and preferences for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, increases loan limits for all borrowers, including:

- Increased direct ownership loan limit to \$300,000
- Increased operating loan limit to \$300,000.

### **Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged**

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person whom has operated a farm for not more than 10 years, will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm, agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA and does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.

### **Rural Youth Loans**

FSA can make loans to youth to establish and operate income producing projects in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations.

**The maximum loan size is \$5,000.** To qualify:

- Be between 10 and 20 years old;
- Live in a town of less than 10,000;
- Be unable to obtain a loan from other sources;
- Conduct a modest income producing project in a supervised program of work.

Applicants must also be capable of planning, managing, and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. Contact Mack Francoeur, Jr. at 269-781-4263 ext. 2 for additional information.

## Emergency Farm Loans Available



USDA/FSA emergency farms loans are available in Calhoun County for all qualified farm operators as a result of losses caused by the following weather conditions:

Date Declared	Disaster Description	Final Date to Apply
06/07/2011	Strong winds and tornado – 05/29/2011	02/07/2012

### Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property;
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;
- Pay essential family living expenses;
- Reorganize the farming operation;
- Refinance certain debts.

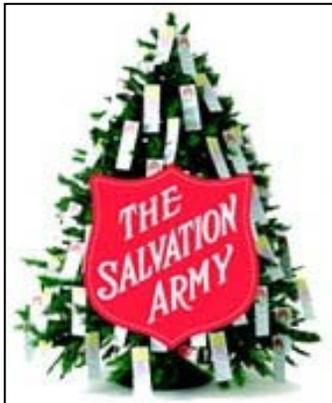
All emergency loans must be fully collateralized. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000. Loans for crop, livestock, and non-real estate losses are normally repaid within 1 to 7 years; depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability, and collateral available as loan security. In special circumstances, terms of up to 20 years may be authorized. Loans for physical losses to real estate are normally repaid within 30 years. In certain circumstances, repayment may be made over a maximum of 40 years. The current annual interest rate for emergency loans is 3.75 %. Calhoun County producers should contact Mack Francoeur, Jr. at 269-781-4263 ext. 2.

### Email Addresses Requested!



To cut costs, FSA is increasing our communication with farmers through email. If we do not have a current email address on file for you, please visit or call (269-781-4263, ext. 2) the Calhoun FSA office with an address where you can receive information about FSA. This can be your own email, or **if you do not have an email account, you can provide us with a friend or family member's email** that would pass the information along to you. In the future, the Calhoun FSA office will be sending information, such as newsletters and reminders, to your email. In the mean time, to receive general notifications from FSA via email

you can visit Michigan's FSA website and sign up for updates: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi>. Follow the "Newsletters" link on the left column of the main page and enter your email in the "Sign up for updates" box under "Stay Connected" section on the right side of the page.



**A Salvation Army Angel Tree is now up at the Marshall USDA Service Center. The tree is decorated with paper angels that include a child's age and gender. Donors remove a tag from the tree and purchase gift items appropriate for the child represented by the tag. Donors then return the unwrapped gift item to any drop-off station (Marshall USDA Service Center is a drop-off station). The gifts are then delivered to our local Salvation Army and, ultimately, to**

**needy children in this area. Make Christmas special for whatever name is on that angel buy some presents for them, clothes whatever they are going to need, just so everybody can has a Merry Christmas this year.**

### 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 within 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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs 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, political beliefs, genetic information, 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, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). 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.**