

Cass County FSA
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ACREAGE REPORTING

Acreage reporting time is here! Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs including but not limited to: DCP, CRP, NAP and Commodity Loans. It is important that acreage reported to Federal Crop Insurance and the FSA Office match.

The deadline to report crop acreage has been extended to **August 14, 2009**. If you have not reported your acres, please contact the FSA office to schedule an appointment.

DCP & ACRE Signup Extended

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 in 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. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month if requested. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

ACRE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT NOW THROUGH AUGUST 14

The Average Crop Revenue Program (ACRE) began April 27, 2009 and runs through August 14, 2009. Producers currently enrolled in DCP for 2009 have the option of cancelling farms that they wish to enroll in ACRE. Producers who elect the ACRE program are required to obtain signatures of all landowners on form CCC-509 ACRE. Once CCC-509 ACRE has all signatures, the producer is then eligible to enroll in ACRE. However, once a farm is enrolled in ACRE, the farm remains in ACRE through 2012.

Producers who elect the ACRE program agree to: forgo counter-cyclical payments, accept a 20% reduction of their direct payments and accept a 30% reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm.

Farm yields for crop years 2004-2008 will be involved in the farm trigger process and therefore, are needed. Yields are established using production evidence, including crop insurance yields that the producer would need to obtain. If production evidence is not available, average county yields can be used.

The deadline to elect and enroll in ACRE is **August 14th**. Please contact your local FSA office for an appointment.

CONSERVATION RESERVE

While it's unlikely there will be a general CRP signup in the near future, landowners or operators who would like to enroll 10 or more acres in CRP may be eligible to enroll in CRP SAFE or Continuous CRP. Please contact the FSA for more information.

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

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

THINKING OF CLEARING A FENCE ROW?

Most USDA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop (sodbuster), as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Further, USDA participants are prohibited from converting wetlands for agricultural production purposes (swampbuster) 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.

NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) PROVISIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE



NAP basic provisions 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..."

ATTENTION 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.

FSA FARM LOANS

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who can not 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, loan rates, loan term and use of proceeds. Cass County farmers should contact Bill Hogan at 269-657-7055.



FARM LOAN LIMITS

The new farm bill expands and enhances farm loan programs and preferences for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, increases loan limits for all borrowers, including the increase of direct ownership loan borrowing limit to \$300,000 and the increase of operating loan borrowing limit to \$300,000.

LOANS AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

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 who 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.

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, a participant must 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, and 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.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

FOREIGN LANDOWNERS



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

New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments. The loan repayment rate may now be determined as the **lesser** of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on: 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or 2) an alternative method the secretary may develop.

Beginning April 15, 2009, for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) determines and publishes daily loan repayment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days. At the same time, CCC will announce each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The new method will replace the current one, which is based on the previous day's market rates. **The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.**

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

This new loan repayment method will minimize potential forfeitures, accumulation of CCC stocks, CCC storage costs, market impediments and discrepancies in benefits across state and county boundaries. More details on specific crops are available at your county FSA office.

Aq Affair III 2009 On-Farm Field Day

Every year the Cass County Groundwater Stewardship puts on an on-farm field day. Each year a different producer in the county hosts the event. This year Dave High will be the host. The event will take place on **August 19, 2009 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

Field day is a time for producers to gather and not only talk about what is going on in the county but to listen to educational sessions that will help them better their farming operations. The 2009 field day topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Commodity Markets (how and why to lock in prices)
- Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Phase 1
- Farming in today's economy (save money while protecting the environment)
 - Soil testing, MSU New “N” Recommendations
 - Auto Steer, Light Bar, Fuel (interactive with tractors on site)
 - Comparing Case IH and John Deere
- Farmers Care (Update on HSUS, How farmers can tell their story)

We will also be serving dinner. For more information on the event or to RSVP please contact the Cass County Conservation District at (269) 445-8643 x 3.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 CASS COUNTY FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 1127 E STATE ST
 CASSOPOLIS MI 49031

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

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

August 3	Last Day to Submit County Committee Nominations
August 14	Last Day to Enroll in DCP and ACRE
August 14	Last Day to report crop acres
September 1	2010 NAP Sales closing date for Nursery Crops
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – Offices Closed
September 30	2010 NAP Sales closing date for Forage
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.