



# Cass County News

June 2010

Issue No. 2

**Cass County FSA  
USDA Service Center**  
1127 E State Street  
Cassopolis MI 49031  
269-445-8641 ext. 2  
269-445-0619 ( 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 Grabemeyer,  
Chairperson  
Carl Sparks, Vice-Chair  
Dan Stutsman, Member  
Esther Leach, Advisor

**Staff**  
Marcia J Collins, CED  
Judi Kidman, PT  
Zelda Cloud, PT  
Rhonda Barnett, PT  
Bruce Dean, PT  
John Green, Field Asst.  
Robert Dohm, Field Asst.  
Richard Swartz, Field Asst.

**Dates to Remember**  
**June 15** – Deadline to submit forms CCC-927/928 to IRS  
**June 30** – Deadline to report fall-seeded small grains  
**July 5** – Office closed in observance of Independence Day  
**July 15** – Deadline to report all crops except fall-seeded small grain  
**Aug 1** – Last day to request a farm combination or division  
**Sept 6** - Office closed in observance of Labor Day  
**Sept 30**- Deadline to purchase NAP for alfalfa/hay/grass and fall seeded crops  
**Continues** – Farm Storage Facility Loans  
**Continues** – Continuous Conservation Reserve Program & CRP-SAFE



## Crop Reporting Time Fast Approaching

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:

- **Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program(DCP);**
- **Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE);**
- **Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments;**
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP);**
- **Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**

Form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by:

- **June 30, 2010 for fall seeded small grain crops;**
- **July 15, 2010 for all crops, except fall seeded small grains.**

## ACRE Production Requirements

Producers enrolled in ACRE are required to accurately submit a report of 2009 production for all ACRE farms no later than July 15, 2010 for each covered commodity for which an acreage report of planted acres greater than zero was filed.

Acceptable documentation includes;

- Crop insurance and NAP records
- Commercial receipts, settlement sheets or load summaries of the crop that was sold
- Loan and LDP records
- Contemporaneous measurements, truck scale tickets, and contemporaneous diaries, as is necessary to verify the information if the crop was fed as long as the records are reliable or verifiable.



## SURE

Currently applications for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) are being taken for the 2008 Crop Year. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that were incurred starting in the crop year 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops of economic significance in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage.

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,
- the crop of economic significance must be 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,
- the farm experiencing the loss must be in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties. Those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are also eligible to receive SURE payments for production losses or crop 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 Q & A are also available online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

***NOTE: HAIL INSURANCE DOES NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENT TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE S.U.R.E. PROGRAM.***

## **TAP**

Sign-up for TAP has begun. To qualify producers must suffer qualifying tree, bush, and vine losses in excess of 15 percent mortality *after adjustment for normal mortality*, have owned the eligible trees, bushes, and vines when the natural disaster occurred, and will replace the eligible trees, bushes, and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

Producers must have obtained crop insurance/NAP for the crops grown on the trees, vines, and bushes, to be eligible. A field visit will be made to determine the number of trees, vines, or bushes lost, the number in the stand and the number of acres in the stand.

Anyone interested in applying for the TAP program should contact the office.

## **NAP Production Reporting**

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield each year. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. The records need to show crop disposition. It is recommended producers submit 2009 production records soon after harvest. ***All production records for 2009 must be submitted by the 2010 acreage report date for the crop. The final acreage reporting date for NAP crops is July 15, 2010.***

Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for NAP benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to a natural disaster condition.
- Crops must be inspected by Loss Adjuster to be eligible to receive payment for a loss.

## **New Face**

If you have called the office lately and wondered if you had the right number when a man answered, wonder no more, you did dial the right number. Please join us in welcoming our newest employee, Bruce Dean. Bruce grew up on a farm in Lawton but now lives in Portage, he will be handling the DCP/ACRE programs. So stop in and introduce yourself.

## **CRP**

A general sign-up has not been announced at this time. Producers who are interested in the Continuous CRP may contact the office at any time. Continuous CRP practices include filter strips along permanent bodies of water and field windbreaks.

### **Nominations for County Committee Open June 15**

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of the operations of Farm Service Agency (FSA). They help in the delivery of FSA farm programs at a local level, as well as, work to make FSA farm programs serve the needs of local producers.

Since County Committee elections happen once a year, here is a refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee.

Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. Cass County will be holding an election for a person to represent LAA 2, which includes Silver Creek, Wayne, Pokagon, Howard and Milton Townships. This position is currently held by David Grabemeyer.

Nominations for candidates to run for the FSA county committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area 2 will be accepted from June 15 through August 2, 2010.

Producers, who are eligible to vote in LAA 2 and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age, may be nominated to serve on the county committee.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers may nominate candidates. All farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers are encouraged to participate.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on August 2, or postmarked by midnight August 2, 2010.

A nomination form, FSA-669A, is included in this newsletter. More information on the elections, including nomination forms, is available at the county office or online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections> .

<p><b>FSA-669A</b> (03-24-10)</p>	<p><b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b> Farm Service Agency</p>
<p><b>NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION</b></p>	

<p>1. NAME OF NOMINEE (Type or Print Nominee's Full Name)</p>	<p><b>TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE</b></p>	
<p>2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE</p>	<p>4. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE RECEIVED</p>	
<p>3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION:</p> <p><i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.  <input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</p>	<p>5. COUNTY</p>	
<p>3A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE</p>	<p>3B. DATE</p>	<p>6. LAA</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Check here if nominee is a write-in candidate.</p>	<p>7. STATE</p>	

<p>8. NOMINATOR'S CERTIFICATION:</p> <p><i>If this nomination is by other than self, the following eligible voter or representative of a community based organization hereby nominates the afore-named person to be a candidate in the next County FSA Committee election for the county.</i></p>	<p>8A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR</p>
<p>8B. DATE</p>	<p><i>(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required).</i></p>

**9. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE**

**VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES:** The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

<p><u>ETHNICITY</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino  <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino</p>	<p><u>RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable)</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native    <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American  <input type="checkbox"/> Asian    <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  <input type="checkbox"/> White</p>	<p><u>GENDER</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male  <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p>
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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM**

- Complete the form as follows:
- ITEM 1** Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:
    - A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
    - B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
    - C. Willing to serve if elected.
  - ITEM 2** Enter the nominee's current address.
  - ITEM 3** The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.
  - ITEMS 3A & 3B** The nominee must sign and date.
  - ITEMS 8A & 8B** The nominator must sign and date. *(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required.)*
  - ITEM 9** Completing this item is voluntary.

**ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 2, 2010.**

**NOTE:** *The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). The information will be used to obtain nominees for election to the County FSA Committee. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for County Personnel Records, USDA/FSA-6. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility for nomination for election to the County FSA Committee.*

*According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.*

Cass County FSA Office  
1127 E State Street  
Cassopolis MI 49031



PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LANSING, MI  
PERMIT #19

This form is available electronically.

**FSA-669A**  
(03-24-10)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farm Service Agency

Form Approved - OMB No. 0560-0229

## NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

This form allows individuals to nominate themselves or any other person as a candidate. If additional forms are needed, this one may be copied or may be obtained at the County FSA Office or obtained electronically at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Each form submitted must be:

- A. Limited to one nominee.
- B. Signed and dated by the nominee in Item 3. Nominee must sign if willing to have his/her name placed on the ballot and agrees to serve if elected.

**Note:** Name shown on ballot will appear exactly the same as in Agency records.

- C. Delivered to the County FSA Office or postmarked no later than August 2, 2010.
- D. Signed and dated as a write-in candidate if elected as a member and willing to serve on the COC.

The County FSA Committee is responsible for reviewing each form to determine the eligibility of nominees. A person who files this form and is found ineligible will be so notified and have an opportunity to file a challenge.

Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. A producer is eligible to be a County FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the election is to be held and is eligible to vote.

Federal regulations may prohibit County FSA Committee members from holding certain positions in some farm, commodity, and political organizations if such positions pose a conflict of interest with FSA duties. The positions include functional offices such as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer; and positions on boards or executive committees. Conflict of interest restrictions also apply to employees, operators, managers, and majority owners of tobacco warehouses. Questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the County FSA Office.

A candidate has the option to request that all voted ballots for an individual county committee election be returned to the respective State Office in lieu of being returned to the county office. This request must be in writing and submitted to the local County Executive Director prior to the announced end of the nomination period.

The duties of County FSA Committee members include:

- A. Administering farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- B. Informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of the FSA programs.
- C. Keeping the State FSA Committee informed of LAA conditions.
- D. Monitoring changes in farm programs.
- E. Participating in county meetings as necessary.
- F. Performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee.

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, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW. Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (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 Marcia J Collins at 269-445-8641, ext. 2**