



January/February  
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# Cass County News

Cass County FSA  
1127 E. State Rd.  
Cassopolis, MI 49031  
(269) 445-8641, Ext. 2  
FAX: (269) 445-0619

**County Committee**  
F. David Grabemeyer  
Carl Sparks  
Dan Stutsman

**Advisor**  
Esther Leach

**Staff**  
Judi Kidman  
Zelda Cloud  
Rhonda Barnett  
Bruce Dean

**Farm Loan Manager**  
William Hogan, VanBuren

**Acting County Executive  
Director**  
Jayne A. Van Ness



## EMPLOYEE CHANGES

The Cass County FSA Office has had the following employee changes:

- **Marcia Collins, County Executive Director** after 30(+) years of service has retired effective December 2011.

We wish Marcia best wishes for a healthy and enjoyable retirement.

We welcome Jayne A. VanNess as the Acting County Executive Director under a “Temporary Shared Management” operation. Due to budget constraints, the Farm Service Agency is diligently evaluating all county office positions to determine which vacancies can be filled at this time to continue to be within the State Ceiling requirement for positions authorized as well as budget provided by Washington D.C.

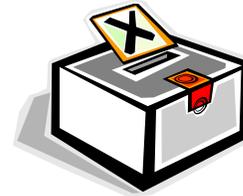
Due to neighboring county office changes, **Bruce Dean** will be periodically assisting the Allegan County FSA Office.

Please be patient with the staff and delays that may result based on these personnel action.

### FSA Moving to Electronic Newsletters

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new eGovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail. Moving towards electronic publications will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. To sign up for EGovDelivery please access; <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>

Check out Michigan’s website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi)



## Committee Election Results

The Cass County Committee election was held on December 8<sup>th</sup> with the following results:

**Carl Sparks** was re-elected to fill the three year term beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. **Stephen Richmond** was elected as the 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate to the Cass County Committee **Donald Disterheft** was elected as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate to the Cass County Committee.

**Due to budgetary issues, County Committee Meetings will be held quarterly throughout calendar year 2012.**

## WETLAND PROVISIONS

Potential violations of the wetland rules including bringing new land into production by clearing trees or improving drainage by tiling or dredging have been occurring. **BEFORE you begin any of these projects, please stop by the Farm Service Agency Office** and complete form AD-1026. An evaluation by NRCS will be completed to evaluate and certify the compliance of the tract requested. You will be notified by NRCS of the results with appropriate procedures to follow if you disagree with those results.





## DCP Sign Up to Start

Sign up for the 2012 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) will begin on January 23, 2012 and end June 1, 2012.

Advance payments will not be authorized for the 2012 program year. Final payments are still projected to be disbursed on/or about October/November 2012.

Please contact your local FSA Office to schedule an appointment so that all records can be gathered and contracts prepared in advance.

We remind producer's that planting fruits and/or vegetables (Dry Beans, Sweet Corn, etc) on base acres without an authorized Fruits and Vegetable (FAV) history established will be considered a contract violation. If your intentions are to plant an FAV commodity on a specific farm, visit with your local FSA Office in advance to remain in compliance with farm bill provisions.

- **CASH LEASE REQUIREMENTS**

**All leases provided to the FSA Offices must include specific wording. That includes:**

- 1) **Type of lease**
- 2) **Landowner name, signature and date**
- 3) **Operator name, signature and date.**
- 4) **Length of Lease**
- 5) **Farm number**

**If a formal cash lease agreement is not on file, a cash rent certification option is available that may be used in lieu of a formal written lease. This option is only available for those farms that were cash leased in the previous crop year by the same individual.**

## SURE PROGRAM DEADLINE-2010 Crop Disaster Program

Sign up for the 2010 SURE Program has begun. To be eligible for this program, producers must have purchased at least the catastrophic risk insurance protection (CAT) for all insurable crops of economic significance and/or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) coverage for non insurable crops for the 2010 crop year.

For SURE, a "farm" is eligible when:

- A portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration; or
- The actual revenue is less than 50% of the normal revenue

Please note....a "farm" refers to all crop acreage in the county/counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or farm livestock feeding. You must have suffered a 10 percent revenue loss on at least one crop of economic significance to be eligible for SURE

If you feel that you may qualify for this program, please contact your local FSA Office.

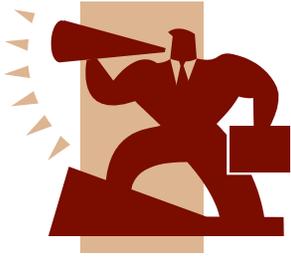
The DEADLINE to enroll is June 1, 2012.

## POWER OF ATTORNEY

Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices have available "power of attorney" POA forms that enable producer's to designate another person to act on their behalf to conduct FSA business activities.

Individuals interested may visit the office to complete the necessary paperwork and/or have the authority witnessed by a notary service on the required FSA form.





## TRANSFER OF FARM'S ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

A change in a farm's administrative county office may be permitted to a neighboring county that currently has an FSA office without completing a farm combination in the receiving county if at least 1 of the following applies:

- The principal dwelling of the farm operator has changed.
- A change has occurred in the operation of the land.
- There has been a change that would cause the changed administrative county office to be more accessible.
- The producer documents that the changed administrative county office is "significantly" more convenient.

In and out transfers shall be:

- Signed by the farm operator and all owners.
- A 1-time option if done because of convenience. (unless a farm change in operation or ownership of the farm has resulted).
- Made only to a county that currently has an FSA office and is contiguous to the county where the farm is located.

**Owner's and operator's should be aware that eligibility to vote in county committee elections may be affected.**



## COMMODITY LOAN PROGRAM

Time is running out to request a 2011 commodity loan on grain stored either on the farm in an eligible storage structure or in an approved warehouse.

The deadlines are:

January 31, 2012 for wool and mohair.

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 for wheat, oats and barley.

May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 for corn and soybeans

Contact your local FSA for additional information.

## PREVENTED PLANTING ACREAGE

FSA issued revised provisions regarding the maximum number of prevented planted acres to be approved. FSA will no longer base the eligibility on the history of planting and/or prevented planting of the specific crop.

Deadline to file for prevented planting acreage must be requested within 15 days of the ending planting date.

## SPOUSAL SIGNATURES

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. Spouses may sign loan documents only when an FSA Power of Attorney form is on file

## Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holding to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the required AFIDA forms could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property.

## BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES

All FSA payments are to be made by direct deposit unless there is a financial hardship to prevent it. Producers need to notify the FSA Office when bank account changes have occurred in order to prevent a delay in payments being deposited.

## WOMEN'S AND HISPANIC CLAIM PROCESS

The Federal Government has set up a claims process to provide money to farmers who may have been discriminated against because they were women or Hispanic. If you believe the United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the following website: <https://farmerclaims.gov>

More information is available at the Farm Service Agency office.

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### 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 the County Office in person or by phone.

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### FARM LOAN BORROWERS – BE PREPARED

Producers that have farm loans with FSA are reminded that they must provide data for their Year-End Analysis (YEA) to their loan officer each year. Borrowers are urged to provide the following documents timely so that their files can be reviewed/maintained:

- Balance sheets
- Projected cash flows
- Actual income and expense statements

The office will be contacting borrowers for this information this month. Please be prepared.

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#### Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program is available to interested producer's who need additional on farm storage or would like to modify existing structures. Basic details of the program are:

- Provide quotes of new structures and/or a cost break down of new equipment.
- Pay a \$100.00 application fee.
- Purchase crop insurance on all insurable crops in the county where the facility is constructed.
- Purchase all peril insurance on the structure listing FSA as the loss payee.
- Complete a title search on the parcel underlying the facility.

Contact FSA for additional details.

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sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's incomes derived from any public assistance programs. (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 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.