



# NEWSLETTER



August 2012

USDA Service Center

Chippewa/Mackinac/Luce  
County FSA  
2487 Ashmun Street  
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783  
906-632-9611(phone)  
906-632-0341 (fax)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/mi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi)

Hours  
Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### Website

[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

#### County Committee

Brent Cottle  
Scott Hill  
Max Macaulay

#### Committee Advisor

Jeff Holt

County Executive Director  
Kaye Hillock-Vining

#### Office Staff

Melissa Gabbard  
Lynn MacArthur

#### Farm Loan Manager

Betty Garrett  
989-356-3596

#### Farm Loan Officer

Bruce Stephenson  
906-428-1060

## Emergency Farm Loans Available

USDA/FSA emergency farm loans are available to qualified producers in all Upper Peninsula Counties as a result of losses caused by the following weather conditions:

**Disaster Description** – The effects of blizzards, excessive snow, excessive heat, excessive rain, high winds, hail, freeze, frost, tornadoes, flooding and lightning.

**Dates of Disaster** – January 1, 2012 to May 11, 2012.

**Final Date to Apply** – March 1, 2013

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 2.25 percent.

For more information farm operators should contact their local FSA Farm Loan Program office or the Farm Loan Program office in

the Gladstone USDA Service Center at 906-428-1060.

## Over The Counter Channel (OTCnet)

FSA/CCC is moving toward OTCnet, an electronic method for processing customer check payments. When a check is submitted for payment either in person or through the mail, the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information.

<http://fms.treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>

### What is OTCnet?

OTCnet is a Web-based online application process for converting paper checks presented to FSA into electronic debits to the producer's bank account. It presents many benefits, such as reducing lost/misplaced checks and paper handling. This improves customer relations, speeds the check clearing process, and reduces the potential for human error.

### How will my check be handled?

The check will be scanned into the system and voided. The customer will not receive the check back from FSA. FSA will hold checks for up to 14 calendar days to ensure that the item was successfully processed, and then FSA will shred the check.

### How quickly will funds be transferred from my account?

The transfer of funds from your account could occur within 24 hours. Therefore, you should be sure that you have sufficient funds in your account to process the transaction. If you do **not** have sufficient funds, we may initiate the transaction again.

## Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc, FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office.



## Changing Bank Accounts

All FSA payments should be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

### How will this transaction appear on my account statement?

The transfer of funds will be reflected on your account statement. The transaction may be recorded in a different place on your statement than where your checks normally appear, such as under “other withdrawals” or “other transactions.”

### What are my rights if there is a problem with the transaction?

You have protections under Federal law for an unauthorized electronic fund transfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediately if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authorized or is otherwise incorrect.

## Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Insurance Deadlines

Has a natural disaster like drought, excessive rain, or high winds caused crop losses or prevented planting? Did this impact your bottom line? Crops not insurable under Risk Management Agency CAT Crop Insurance are covered under NAP and can be purchased for \$250 per crop and a maximum of \$750 per county!

To qualify for administrative service fee waiver, a limited resource producer must have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4, or less than 50% of the county median household in both the previous 2 years. Limited resource producer status can be determined using a web site available through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool through the National Resource and Conservation Service at [www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tols.asp](http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tols.asp). Please note that limited resource producers are required to recertify limited resource producer status annually.

### The DEADLINE for purchasing your 2013 policies are as follows:

August 30, 2012 - Aquaculture, Nursery Crops, Christmas Trees & Grass Sod  
September 30, 2012 – Mixed Hay, Alfalfa, Pasture, Rye, Seed Crops & Fall Speltz  
November 20, 2012 – Apples, Blueberries, Cranberries, Raspberries & Strawberries  
December 1, 2012 – Honey & Maple Sap

March 15, 2013 – Peas, Oats/Barley for Forage, Sorghum, Beans, Potatoes, Triticale, Vegetable Crops & Corn in some counties.

If you grow a crop not listed here – call your local FSA Service Center. Keep in mind that some of these crops are covered by Federal Crop Insurance in certain Upper Peninsula counties. In counties where alfalfa and mixed forage (AGM) are covered by crop insurance, FSA cannot sell a NAP policy for these types of forage when the seedings are older than 6 years. Crops determined not insurable and not eligible for NAP do not need to meet Risk Management Purchase Requirements.

**REMEMBER - Without insurance you are NOT eligible for National Disaster Programs!**

## Feds Feed Families

Feds Feed Families is a national food drive that your local USDA Service Centers are participating in. This program began in 2009 as part of President Obama’s *United We Serve* campaign and is designed to help food banks and pantries stay stocked during the summer months, a time when they traditionally encounter decreases in donations and increases in the need for assistance. Your contributions to this project are encouraged and needed. Perishable and non-perishable items are accepted. Each local service center has a collection box for your contributions. Donations will be accepted through August 31.



## Sodbuster Regulations

The term sodbusting is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland to crop production after December 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

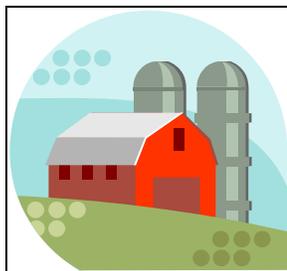
If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production.

In addition, producers and the producer's affiliates have to file an AD-1026 in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer's signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.



## GovDelivery – Agriculture is a 24/7 Industry

GovDelivery is an important tool the FSA is using to reach producers. You will receive county newsletters, deadline reminders, and other time-sensitive material directly to your email account or Smartphone. This will help the FSA conserve natural resources and reduce taxpayer expenses associated with various mailings. FSA's electronic news service is free and convenient. All producers with email are highly encouraged to subscribe to this service. There are two ways to subscribe to GovDelivery. You can go to on to [www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe) and enter your email address yourself or you can stop by your local FSA office and fill out a form authorizing the FSA staff to enter your email for you. Once you are a subscriber to GovDelivery you will be customize your preferences and set subscriber options. Don't Delay – Sign Up Today!



## Farm Safety

Summer is an exciting and hectic time on our county farms. Your Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac FSA employees care about our customers, and want to remind them to practice farm safety.

Remember to: Walk around machinery and check shields and guards; make sure the PTO's master shield is in place; make sure Slow Moving Vehicle signs are on machinery.

If you are taking medicine, take it at the appropriate time and eat on schedule.

If you are working in grain bins know that flowing grain can kill, and it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to get trapped. Try not to work alone in bins or confined spaces, and if that's not possible let someone know where you are by checking in regularly by cell phone.

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) offers the following safety tips for farmers:

1. Educate yourself on farm equipment. Read and follow instructions according to the equipment's manuals about safety.
2. Conduct regular equipment inspections.
3. Don't wear loose clothing while entering confined spaces such as grain bins, silos and hoppers as this can prevent entanglements.
4. Install Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors.
5. Use seat belts while operating tractors with a ROPS. Do not allow additional passengers on the tractor with you.
6. While operating tractors and other farm equipment, be very cautious on rural roadways.
7. Use protective gear when operating machinery: Be familiar with hazardous chemicals. Take extra precautions when handling chemicals such as anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane gas and hydrogen sulfide.
8. Consistently educate your family and co-workers about safety practices, especially children.

## LUCE COUNTY RESIDENTS Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)

The Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac County FSA Service Center has announced the availability of the Emergency Forest Restoration Program funds for those affected by the Luce Count Duck Lake Forest Fire earlier this year. The application signup period is 30 days and starts September 10, 2012 and goes through October 10, 2012.

EFRP provides cost-share assistance to nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land owners who have experienced losses from the Duck Lake Forest Fire. EFRP program participants may receive financial assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency forest restoration practices as determined by the county FSA committees.

### Land Eligibility

Land eligibility will be determined using on-site inspections that assess the type and extent of damage. To be eligible for EFRP, NIPF land must:

- Have existing tree cover (or had existing tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and is suitable for growing trees)
- Be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, or other private legal entity, that has definitive decision-making authority over the land.

In addition, the natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would:

- Impair or endanger the natural resources on the land
- Materially affect future use of the land.

For additional information contact the Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Service Center at 906-632-9611 ext. 2.

<b>August Loan Rates</b>	
Farm Storage Facility Loans – 7 year	1.000%
10 year	1.625%
12 year	1.875%

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
August 30	Deadline to purchase 2013 NAP policies for Aquaculture, Nursery Crops, Christmas Trees, & Sod Grass
September 30	Deadline to purchase 2013 NAP policies for Mixed Hay, Alfalfa, Pasture, Rye, Seed Crops, & Fall Speltz, Fall & Spring Wheat, Mixed Forage Oats & Peas.
November 15	Deadline to certify all 2013 Perennial Forage, Fall Wheat, & other Fall-Seeded Small Grains
December 1	Deadline to purchase 2013 NAP policies for Honey & Maple Sap

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