

March 2014



# NEWSLETTER



- USDA'S FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA) OFFERS FARM BILL WEBSITE AND ONLINE OVERVIEW OF FARM BILL PROGRAMS
- LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS AFFECTED BY SEVERE WEATHER URGED TO KEEP GOOD RECORDS
- FARM RECORD UPDATES
- HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE
- FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

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## Delta, Alger, Marquette and Schoolcraft FSA Updates

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### Delta Area FSA Office

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Gladstone, MI 49837  
Phone: 906-428-1060  
Fax: 855-647-4846

**County Executive Director:**  
Mitchell M. Towne

**Farm Loan Officer:**  
Bruce Stephenson

**Program Technicians:**  
Kris Gallant  
Rita Mills

**Farm Loan Program Technician:**  
Bonnie Richmond

### County Committee Members:

Jon Haindl,	Chair
Allen Porath,	Vice Chair
Dan Bahrman,	Member
Heidi Heidtman,	Member
James Dalgord,	Member
Diane Hanson,	Advisor

**Next County Committee Meeting:** April 17th, 2014  
at 9:30 am

## USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill) and for an FSA program overview, please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Livestock Producers Affected by Severe Weather Urged to Keep Good Records

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) again appeals to livestock producers affected by natural disasters such as the drought in the West and the unexpected winter storm in the upper Midwest to keep thorough records. This includes livestock and feed losses, and any additional expenses that are a result of losses to purchased forage or feed stuff.

In addition to western drought and the early-winter snowstorms, there are a variety of disasters from floods to storms to unexpected freezes. Each event causes economic consequences for farmers and ranchers throughout the United States. FSA recommends that owners and producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures;
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records;
- Pictures of on-farm storage facilities that were destroyed by wind or flood waters; and evidence of damaged farm land.

Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or an FSA county office to learn more about FSA programs and loans. For information about USDA's Farm Bill implementation plan, visit [www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill).

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## Farm Record Updates

Producers who have bought or sold land, added or dropped rented land and/or changed field boundaries within their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. Proof of ownership for purchased property is required to maintain accurate records. Failure to update required changes may lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties.

While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

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## Highly Erodible Land and Wetland 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 is required. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. This would include projects initiated by the drain commission or parties other than the landowner or operator. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/).

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## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade permanent farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury

Department. March rates are:

- 7-Year Loan Term: 2.1250
- 10-Year Loan Term: 2.7500
- 12-Year Loan Term: 2.8750

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding \$50,000.

To enhance repayment ability, multi-peril crop insurance or NAP is required for each year of the loan term. Fruit and vegetable producers, who produce a minimum of 3 different fruits and/or vegetables, may qualify for a waiver of this requirement if determined unfeasible by the State FSA Committee.

A series of improvements to the program have been developed to better tailor loans to finance on-farm storage and handling for small and mid-sized farms. The changes also for the first time allow FSFL's to cover the structure and equipment required to get fruits and vegetables washed, treated and packed along with cold storage.

The area of a structure required to house eligible handling equipment is eligible, in addition to the cold storage space. The handling equipment needs for fruit and vegetable producers are unique, based on the farming operation. Crops must go through certain processes before they can be placed in cold storage for quality to be maintained. Because of this the following equipment is also eligible for loan as long as it is permanently affixed.

- boxers and baggers
- washers, waxers and polishers
- bulk bin tippers
- case palletizers
- cold dip tanks
- fruit/vegetable conveyors
- food safety-related equipment (for example, sanitizers or pre-washing filter tanks)
- hydrocoolers
- ice machines
- quality graders
- sealants, sizers, sorting bins/tables

For more information about FSFL, please visit your FSA county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).