

February 2013



Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska FSA Updates

Grand Traverse Area FSA Office

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Important Dates to Remember

- **January 15th** - Deadline to certify **apples, blueberries, cherries, grapes, & peaches** - Contact the office for late certification to maintain eligibility if you missed the deadline.
- **February 19th** - Sign-up for DCP and Acre for the 2013 crops begins
- **March 1st** - Final date to apply for an **Emergency Loan** based on disaster S3259 - Spring 2012 early warm-up / subsequent frost event
- **March 15th** - Final date to purchase NAP coverage on most spring seeded NAP crops including sweet corn, pumpkins and most vegetables
- **March 15th** - Final date to purchase FCIC crop insurance for annual crops
- **March 25th** - Final date for Women and Hispanic farmers and ranchers claim period
- **March 31st** - Final date to request a 2012-crop small grains and honey loans or LDP
- **May 20th** - CRP sign-up begins
- **May 27th** - Office closed in observance of Memorial Day
- **May 31st** - Final date to request 2012-crop feed grains, oilseeds loans or LDP
- **April 29th** - Final date to apply for an Emergency Loan based on disaster S3370 - Summer 2012 Drought and Excessive heat
- **June 7th** - 2011 SURE Sign up Deadline
- **June 14th** - CRP sign-up ends
- **June 30th** - Final date for late-filed certifications for fall-2012 seeded crops, Hay, and Mixed Forage
- **July 15th** - 2012 production reporting deadline for 2012 ACRE program

DCP and ACRE Sign-up

FSA will begin sign-ups for DCP and ACRE for the 2013 crops on **February 19, 2013**. The DCP sign-up period will end on August 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact the Grand Traverse Area FSA Office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

New Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations. The program will operate similar to the Operating Loan program but will include reduced requirements for managerial experience and loan security, as well as reduced paperwork.

The microloan program can be used for such expenses as annual crop inputs, marketing and distribution expenses, purchase of livestock and equipment, and minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers. Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months of when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates will be the same as the regular Operating Loan rates.

For more information, please contact the Grand Traverse Area Farm Service Agency at (231) 941-0951 Ext. 109.

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Applications

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance such as pumpkins and cucumbers, producers must have purchased Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage through FSA. The Crop Insurance and NAP purchase requirement is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation. In addition, the producer must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss in order to be eligible.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program or other Farm Service Agency programs, contact your local FSA office or visit the Farm Service Agency website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/.

Farm Loan Programs – Emergency Farm Loans Available

DEADLINE for Application - March 1, 2013 - Spring 2012 Frost / Freeze

USDA/FSA emergency farms loans are available in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Otsego and 65 other Counties to all qualified farm operators as a result of losses caused by adverse weather conditions.

Effective **June 29, 2012**, the United States Department of Agriculture designated 72 Michigan counties as natural disaster areas.

The counties were designated as natural disaster areas **for losses due to the combined effects of blizzards, excessive snow, excessive heat, excessive rain, high winds, hail, freeze, frost, tornadoes, flooding and lightning that occurred January 1, 2012 through May 11, 2012.**

Additionally, **effective August 29, 2012**, the United States Department of Agriculture designated the entire state of Michigan, which includes 83 counties, as a primary natural disaster area.

The counties were designated as natural disaster areas **for damages and losses due to drought and excessive heat that began March 1, 2012, and continues.**

The disaster designation makes available low interest (2.125%) loans to farm operators in the designated area. Farm operators who suffered a 30% loss in crop production caused by the weather conditions and meet other eligibility requirements may qualify for Emergency (EM) loan assistance from FSA.

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; and
- 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 2.125 percent.

The deadline for filing an EM loan application is **March 1, 2013** for the June disaster designation and April 29, 2013 for the more recent August designation.

For more information farm operators should contact their local FSA office or the Farm Loan Program office in the Traverse City USDA Service Center 231-941-0951

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Sign-up Announced

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 16, 2013 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced at the National Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14th. CRP has a 27-year legacy of protecting the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States. Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA has enrolled 11.7 million acres in various CRP efforts.

"Since the 1980s, the CRP program has established itself as a benchmark in voluntary conservation efforts, providing American producers with assets to address our most critical resource issues," said Vilsack. "Last year, during one of the worst droughts in generations, the CRP proved vital in protecting our most environmentally sensitive lands from erosion. Emergency haying and grazing on CRP lands also supplied critical feed and forage for livestock producers due to the drought. And the program continues to bring substantial returns to rural areas, attracting recreation and tourism dollars into local economies while sustaining natural and wildlife habitat for future generations."

Additional sign-ups for continuous CRP programs-such as Highly Erodible Land Initiative and Initiative to Restore Grasslands, Wetlands and Wildlife-will be announced in spring 2013.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP, which is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years). Producers also are encouraged to look into CRP's other enrollment opportunities offered on a continuous, non-competitive, sign-up basis and that often provide additional financial assistance. Continuous sign-up dates will be announced at a later date.

Over the past 27 years, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, hunters, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts have made CRP one of the largest and most important USDA efforts. CRP continues to make major contributions to national efforts to improve water and air quality, and to prevent soil erosion by protecting the most sensitive areas including those prone to flash flooding and runoff. CRP has also helped increase populations of pheasants, quail, ducks, and rare species, like the sage grouse, the lesser prairie chicken, and other grassland birds. Highlights of CRP include:

- CRP has restored more than two million acres of wetlands and two million acres of riparian buffers;
- Each year, CRP keeps more than 600 million pounds of nitrogen and more than 100 million pounds of phosphorous from flowing into our nation's streams, rivers, and lakes.
- CRP provides \$1.8 billion annually to landowners - dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs; and
- CRP is the largest private lands carbon sequestration program in the country. By placing vulnerable cropland into conservation, CRP sequesters carbon in plants and soil, and reduces both fuel and fertilizer usage. In 2012, CRP resulted in carbon sequestration equal to taking about nine million cars off the road.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Selected Interest Rates for February 2013

90-Day Treasury Bill; 0.125%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct; 1.125%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct; 3.125%

Farm Ownership-Limited Resource Loans; 5.00%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher; 1.50%

Farm Storage Facility Loans; 1.250% (7 yrs), 1.875% (10 yrs), 2.125% (12 yrs)

Commodity Loans 1996-Present; 1.125%

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).