

July 2014



Grand Traverse/Kalkaska/Leelanau County FSA Updates

Grand Traverse Area FSA Office

1501 Cass Street, Ste A
Traverse City, MI 49684

Phone: 231-941-0951
Fax: 855-292-1667

County Executive Director:
Gregory B. Shy

Farm Loan Manager:
James L. Monroe

Farm Loan Officer:
Caleb S. Boge

Program Technicians:
Jan Malik
Janet Howes

**Next County Committee
Meeting:** TBD

COC Nomination Deadline

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees (COC) is important to farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA County Committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County Committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on County Committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA County Committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County Committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The local areas up for election this year are LAA 1 (Leelanau County townships of Bingham, Elmwood, Leelanau, Leland, and Suttons Bay), and LAA 4 (Grand Traverse County townships of Blair, Fife Lake, Grant, Green Lake, Mayfield, Paradise, and Union).

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2014 through August 1, 2014. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#). For more information contact your local FSA office at (231) 941-0951 x2.

USDA'S Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers with New Online Resource to Support the Next Generation of Farmers

To improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers, USDA unveiled www.usda.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

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USDA's New Farmers website has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at 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 at (231) 941-0951 x2 or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Provides 12-Week Progress Update on Disaster Assistance

USDA has processed 106,000 payments to farmers and ranchers in 40 states who suffered drought, blizzard, and other weather related losses between October 2011 and passage of the 2014 Farm Bill. More than \$1.2 billion in payments to qualifying farmers and ranchers have been processed. USDA estimated that roughly \$2.5 billion would be provided in disaster relief to cover losses from October 2011 through September 2014. If those estimates prove accurate, it would mean nearly half of all disaster payments have already been provided.

While disaster relief is a critical lifeline that can prevent farmers and ranchers who do not have access to crop insurance from being wiped out by weather-related losses beyond their control, most producers only receive support equal to 60 percent of their actual losses.

USDA disaster programs include:

The **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** provides payments for grazing losses due to drought and livestock deaths due to adverse weather.

The **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** provides assistance for livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish losses due to disease (including cattle tick fever), weather, wildfires and colony collapse disorder, or for losses not covered under other disaster assistance programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill.

The **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** provides financial assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines that were lost or damaged by natural disasters.

Specific program deadlines are as follows:

- 2011-2013 ELAP – Friday, Aug. 1, 2014
- 2011 -2014 LFP – Friday, Jan. 30, 2015
- 2011-2014 LIP – Friday, Jan. 30, 2015
- 2011-2014 TAP – Monday, Feb. 2, 2015

Producers affected by adverse weather should contact their FSA county office to make an appointment and learn if they are eligible for disaster assistance. For more information, producers may review the 2014 Farm Bill Fact Sheet, and the LIP, LFP, ELAP and TAP fact sheets online, or visit any local FSA office.

Land Contract (LC) Guarantee

The Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program is a valuable tool to transfer farm real estate to the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Guarantees will be offered to the owner of a farm who wishes to sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. The guarantee reduces the financial risk to the seller.

FSA offers two types of guarantees:

- Prompt Payment Guarantee - A guarantee up to the amount of three amortized annual installments plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance.
- Standard Guarantee - A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

The guarantee period is 10 years and the contract payments must be amortized for a minimum of 20 years. The purchase price of the farm cannot exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or the market value of the property.

For additional information you can read the Land Contract Guarantee Program Fact Sheet that is available at your local FSA office (231) 941-0951 x2.

USDA Invites Suggestions for the 2017 Census of Agriculture

USDA invites suggestions for the 2017 Census of Agriculture that is conducted once every five years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The Census provides detailed data covering nearly every facet of U.S. agriculture down to the county level.

NASS released the complete 2012 Census of Agriculture results on May 2, 2014. The agency is now planning the content for the 2017 Agriculture Census and is accepting input. Any individual or organization may submit suggestions on questionnaire items to add or delete, as well as any other ideas concerning the Census. There will be another opportunity to provide official comment through the Federal Register process in the coming weeks.

Content suggestions for the 2017 Census will be accepted until August 4, 2014. Comments can be submitted online at www.agcensus.usda.gov/Contact_Us/Census_Program_Input_Form/. Written suggestions may be mailed to: Census Content Team, Room 6451, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

To learn more and to access the complete 2012 Census of Agriculture results, including State and County Profiles and all the other Census data and tools, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

July Selected Interest Rates

90-Day Treasury Bill: 0.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct: 2.125%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct: 3.875%
Farm Ownership Loans - Joint Financing: 2.500%
Limited Resource Loans: 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct FO Down Payment: 1.500%
Emergency Loans: 3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 7 Yr.*: 2.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 10 Yr.*: 2.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 12 Yr.*: 2.750%
Commodity Loans*: 1.125%

*July's rate

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