

June 2014



NEWSLETTER



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Gratiot County FSA Updates

Gratiot County FSA Office

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Teri Hedrick

Gratiot County Committee:

Scott Apple
Doreen Slavik
Andrea Ackels

**Next County Committee
Meeting:** August 27th at 8:00
am

Report Your Crops Now!

Please call the Gratiot FSA office to set up an appointment to certify your crops. Enrollment in most FSA programs requires you to annually report your crops. This includes acreage enrolled in CRP.

Call now to make sure that you report timely before the **July 15, 2014** deadline.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

FSA Now Accepting Nominations for the COC

The Gratiot FSA County Office Committee (COC) election process has begun! As of June 16th, FSA is accepting nominations for individuals who wish to serve on the Gratiot COC for Local Administrative Area (LAA) #1 (**Seville, Pine River, Bethany, Sumner, and Arcada Townships**). We encourage you to get involved with FSA's County Committee system. If you are a landowner or operator from one of these townships and are interested in actively participating in the COC, please contact our office for more information, or to obtain an FSA-669A Nomination form.

Don't Mow Your CRP or CREP!

Filter strips devoted to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are set aside to filter out sediment, pesticides, herbicides, and associated field nutrients to protect the farm's water resources and promote wildlife habitat. These practices are specifically designed to grow undisturbed during crucial times of the year when natural resources are most vulnerable. **This is why unauthorized mowing from May 1 - July 31 is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

In addition, **complete mowing of filter strips for cosmetic purposes is never permitted and a violation of CRP rules.** Spot-treatment is allowed between August 1 - August 20, or upon request from the Gratiot FSA County Committee (COC).

If you submit a written request to the Gratiot COC and are approved to spot-mow, only the areas of concern must be treated. Additionally, you may also request to spot-treat broadleaf weeds chemically. This also requires approval by the COC. Please plan ahead so that authorization can be obtained prior to taking action on CRP issues.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-Up Underway

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

To expedite applications, all producers who experienced losses are encouraged to bring records documenting those losses to their local FSA Office. Producers should 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

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP):

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

Direct Loan Changes

Changes were made to the interest rate charged on loans where FSA provides 50 percent or less on jointly financed purchases of real estate also called Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans. The interest rate will be the greater of 2.5 percent or the current interest rate for direct Farm Ownership loans minus 2 percent, as a fixed rate for the duration of the loan. At present, the June direct Farm Ownership rate is 4.00 percent. Because the 2.5 percent floor is greater than subtracting 2 percent from the current direct farm ownership loan rate, the rate for Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans in June is 2.50 percent.

Special Accommodations

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 FSA office staff directly or by phone.

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).