



Hillsdale County News

Hillsdale County
USDA Service Center

Hillsdale FSA
588 Olds St. Bldg 2
Jonesville, MI 49250
Phone 517 849-9890 X 2
FAX 517 849-9895
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

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

County Committee
Tom Schroeder -
Chairman
Sheryl Kies – Vice Chair
David Godfrey - Member
Emily McKibbin - Advisor

County Committee meets
the Second Tuesday of
each month at 8:30 a.m.

Farm Program Staff
Nina Draper X 103
Brad Everline X 112
Cindy Gabbard X 104
Jamie Horeni X 113
Angela Lanius X 109
Pattie Nichols X 190

County Executive
Director
Linda Kline X 102

Farm Loan Staff X 107
Deb Wheeler
Joann VanDeusen
Crystal Hepker -
Loan Officer

Farm Loan Manager
Russ LaFollette



CRP General Signup 39

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the USDA's largest private-lands voluntary conservation program. CRP helps agricultural producers convert environmentally sensitive agricultural land to achieve conservation benefits. Certain practices are available on a continuous basis; however, it has been 5 years since the last competitive general CRP signup took place. Producers can offer land for CRP general signup August 2 through August 27, 2010.

To be eligible for CRP, the producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the close of the CRP signup, August 27, 2010. Land must be cropland which has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002- 2007. Land must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa and other multi-year grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for this year.

Benefits to CRP include:

- improved and increased wildlife habitat
- improved water quality
- increased soil quality
- reduce soil erosion
- increase air quality

In return for planting long-term resource conserving covers, FSA provides CRP participants annual rental payments, maintenance payments, cost-share and technical assistance.

Hillsdale County currently has about 20,000 acres enrolled in CRP. This represents 9% of the total cropland.

Don't miss this opportunity! Call the Hillsdale County Office at 517-849-9890 to schedule an appointment.

From the CED's Desk

Due to budgeting constraints, we are not going to be able to send out as many newsletters as we have in the past. In this issue, I have tried to include what I see as critical information for many producers.

First, there will be a CRP General Sign-up starting August 2 and closing August 27, 2010. We have not had a General Sign-up since 2006 so this will open up opportunities for many land owners. See this page for more details.

Another key issue in this newsletter is the **reporting of prevented planted crops.** With the wet spring, Hillsdale County producers faced many challenges with getting their crops planted. Many producers were late in reporting prevented planting wheat last fall. It is critical that the acreage reports to RMA and FSA match. **If prevented planted crops are not timely reported to our office, it may negatively affect the disaster program, SURE. See page two for more information on prevented planting.**

A final key issue is trying to clarify the requirements for SURE, the disaster program. In general, **producers must have insurance on ALL crops, including hay.** Hay insurance can be purchased for 2011 at our office through the NAP program. **For 2011 crops, it must be purchased by September 30, 2010.** Producers who feed their crops must provide verifiable or reliable production evidence. One way to do this is to have a loss adjuster appraise production upon completion of harvest. See page 2 for more information.

As I have stated before, our programs are complex. They can be very confusing. Please call with any questions. We look forward to serving you!

Linda

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium poppies and other drug producing plants.

If convicted of one of these offenses, the program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for direct and counter-cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Bank Account Changes?

FSA payments are electronically transferred into your bank account. **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.

SURE SUPPLEMENT REVENUE ASSURANCE PROGRAM

The "New" Disaster Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. **To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. For this program, hay is considered a crop.** There are some exceptions to this rule so ask at your county office to ensure that you will be eligible for the program.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition. **A crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm.**
- Producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop production or quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

Hillsdale County had Secretarial Disaster declarations for both 2008 and 2009. Therefore, producers who obtained crop insurance or NAP coverage on all crops of economic significance are eligible to apply for SURE. **Signup for 2008 is currently ongoing. A deadline date has not yet been announced. 2009 sign-up will start in the fall.**

PREVENTED PLANTING

All producers should report prevented planted acres. **If you have crop insurance it is critical that you report prevented planting to FSA in a timely manner. In Hillsdale County the final dates to report Prevented Planting are:**

- Corn – June 20
- Soybeans – June 30
- Wheat – November 9

You will be required to fill out a form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, for each crop and each farm that has prevent plant. **If you do not fill out this form by the dates above, your prevented plant request may be disapproved.** A denied claim could negatively affect the value of disaster payments that are available through the SURE.

Please stop by the office as soon as you have determined you will not be planting a field and fill out the form CCC-576. Don't forget this requirement next fall when you are planting wheat! Hopefully this year we will have a fall that is favorable to both harvest and planting!

LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

It is sometimes difficult to prove production when producers are feeding their crops. For the SURE program, if you do not provide crop insurance APH yields, then producers must provide FSA acceptable production records. These may include truck scale tickets, appraisal information from a loss adjustor, contemporaneous reliable diaries, and other documentary evidence.

Upon completion of harvest, producers may want to consider having an appraisal completed by a loss adjustor or FSA staff. This will ensure that production evidence is accepted for the SURE program. **If there is not acceptable production evidence, the maximum eligible loss level will be assigned.**

ACRE Yield Data Deadline Extended

The deadline for 2009 production certification to comply with ACRE was extended until September 1, 2010. The extension is for completing both the farm benchmark yield (2004 through 2008) and the actual farm yield (2009). Participants in the 2009 ACRE program must certify their yields by September 1, 2010 to remain eligible for ACRE benefits.

FSA Farm Loans

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application, and help you understand what information is required.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office.



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 directly or by phone.

Transition Incentives Program “New Program”

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) was created to encourage retired or retiring owners or operators to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

If all program requirements are met, TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the date of the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

To be eligible, TIP requires that the retired or retiring farmer or rancher:

- Have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is in the last year of the contract.
- Agree to allow the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher make conservation and land improvements in accordance with a sustainable farm conservation plan
- Agree to sell, or have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (a minimum of 5 years) the land under CRP contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher by Oct. 1 of the year the CRP contract expires

Generally, TIP only applies to contracts that expire on September 30, 2010, or later. However, retired or retiring owners or operators with CRP contracts that expired on September 30, 2008, and September 30, 2009, may be eligible to enroll in TIP. To learn more about this program, producers interested in applying and participating in TIP should stop by the county office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

As a provision of the 2008 Farm Bill, producers of eligible commodities can obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15-20 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 80-85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and 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 (currently 2.75% to 3.5%).

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction begins. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage loans:

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

For more information about FSFL, please visit your local FSA office.

HILLSDALE CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWS

AGRIPALOOZA, the 2010 annual on-farm/field day of Hillsdale Conservation District will be held **Thursday, September 16th**, at Mark Baker's Farm, 15300 Lickley Rd, Waldron. This event begins at 6:00 p.m. A prime rib dinner from Saucy Dog will be served along with a healthy serving of knowledge. Topics covered will include: Pesticide containment options, Pest Update, PA116, soil health and MEAP. RUP credits pending. It is helpful to pre-register by September 9th, but it is not necessary.

Hillsdale Conservation District and its partners will present a **Skills Forum for Small Farmers, every Tuesday throughout August**. Topics include: Planning for Success, Cottage Canning, High Tunnels and Grazing Season Extension. The classes will be held at the Hillsdale ISD Building on Bacon Rd at 7:00 p.m. You may attend any number of sessions. All sessions are free. It is helpful to pre-register by the Thursday before the session you wish to take, but it is not necessary.

Please contact Sarah Fronczak at sarah.fronczak@mi.nacdnetnet or **517-849-9890x116** for more details on either event.

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

Remember, in order to be eligible for the SURE disaster program, you must carry coverage on all crops including hay. The application deadline date for the 2011 NAP coverage for small grains, fall mint, fall speltz and forage crops, including alfalfa and mixed forage, is September 30, 2010.

Producers who already have coverage on 2010 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2011, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471, application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops.

- Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:
- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.

File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.
 Call the office with questions at 517-849-9890 X 2.

CRP General Sign-up August 2-27



Applications are currently being accepted for offers into the Conservation Reserve Program. The last general sign-up was in 2006. You may want to take advantage of this sign-up in order to protect environmentally sensitive land. See page 1 for more details.

Dates to Remember

August 27	Final date to apply for CRP General Signup 39
Sept.5, 2010	Offices closed, Labor Day
Sept 23, 2010	Final date for asparagus producers to apply for TAA for Farmers
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.