

December 2012



## Hillsdale County FSA Updates

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### Hillsdale County FSA Office

588 Olds St., Bldg 2

Jonesville, MI 49250

**Phone:** 517-849-9890 X 2

**Fax:** 517-849-9895

### COC Election Results

Congratulations to David Godfrey. David was elected to represent the residents of LAA2, (Adams, Jefferson, Pittsford, Wheatland, and Wright Townships) on the County Committee (COC). This is Dave's third and last term on the COC. Each term lasts for 3 years. Melissa Hart will be the alternate representative for LAA2.

We look forward to working with Dave for the next 3 years. Thanks to all who participated in the election!

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### Farm Loan Borrowers - Reminders

#### County Executive Director:

Linda Kline

**Producers who have farm loans with FSA are reminded that installment payments are due January 1st.** Borrowers are urged to contact their loan officer prior to January 1st if they are going to have trouble timely making their payment.

#### Program Technicians:

Nina Draper

Brad Everline

Cindy Gabbard

Angela Lanius

Also, as a reminder, paid property tax receipts need to be turned in as they become available.

It is also time again for Year End Analysis. The office will be contacting you to set up an appointment to obtain the needed information. As usual funding for our programs is limited, if you are going to be requesting assistance for the coming year it is in your best interest to apply as soon as possible.

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### Important Dates and Deadlines

#### Farm Loan Manager:

Russ Lafollette

#### Farm Loan Officer

Crystal Hepker

- **December 25** – Christmas Day - office closed
- **January 1** – New Year's Day – Office closed
- **Jan. 15- New crop reporting date** for Apples, Blueberries, Strawberries, Cherries, Grapes, Peaches
- **March 15** – Sales closing date for many NAP crops, including pumpkins, squash, and watermelons

**Note:** At this time it appears, the office will be open both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Sometimes the federal offices receive permission to close early. Please call before you make the drive to our office! 517-849-9890

**Farm Loan Program  
Technicians:**

Debra Wheeler

Joann VanDeusen



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## Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, please call the office.

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## Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

USDA has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between Sept. 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in their communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

**Website:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

**Phone:** 1-888-508-4429

**Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.**

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, people seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider. To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's news release click on the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>

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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).