

July 2014



NEWSLETTER



Topics for July

- [2014 Acreage Reporting](#)
- [COC Nomination Deadline](#)
- [2012 & 2013 ELAP Applications Must Be Filed By Aug. 1st](#)
- [Don't Mow Your CRP!](#)
- [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#)
- [Unauthorized Disposition Of Grain](#)
- [Farm Reconstitutions](#)
- [Farm Safety](#)
- [Microloan Program](#)

Ionia County FSA Updates

Ionia County FSA Office

431 Swartz Ct, Ste 300
Ionia, MI 48846

Phone: 616-527-2098
Fax: 855-647-4850

County Executive Director

Jenifer A. Taylor

Program Technicians

Diana Graef
William Brandt
Carolyn Lindberg

County Committee Members

Jeff Sandborn
Amanda Powell
Dave Hardy
Allison Badder - Advisor

Farm Loan Manager

Paul E. Wagner

Farm Loan Officer

Sara Possehn

Next County Committee

Meeting: August 7, 2014

2014 Acreage Reporting

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Ionia County FSA Office to file an accurate crop certification report. If you still haven't completed your 2014 crop certification please call (616) 527-2098 ext. 2 to schedule an appointment.

COC Nomination Deadline

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees 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 COC nomination period will end **August 1, 2014**. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#). For more information contact your local FSA office.

2012 & 2013 ELAP Applications Must Be Filed By Aug. 1st

Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses have until August 1, 2014, to submit a notice of loss and application for payment under the 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 the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (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 ELAP Fact Sheet on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

Don't Mow Your CRP!

Filter strips devoted to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are designed 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 is a violation of CRP rules.** Spot-treatment is allowed between August 1 - August 20 upon request from the Ionia FSA County Committee (COC).

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

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food

The Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) initiative is a USDA-wide effort focused on strengthening local and regional food systems.

In recent years, consumers have shown an increased interest in purchasing locally-produced foods and many farmers and ranchers followed the trend and offer fresh foods through local markets.

USDA followed suit, developing KYF2, which helps connect consumers with producers in their community. USDA offers a wide range of programs that can assist farmers, ranchers, businesses, communities and individuals. To learn more about grants, loans and support that is available, visit http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_GRANTS.

These USDA programs stimulate economic development in agricultural communities, foster new opportunities for farmers and ranchers, promote locally and regionally grown and processed foods, cultivate healthy eating habits and educated consumers, expand access to affordable fresh and local food and develop a connection between food, agriculture, community and the environment.

For more information on KYF2, visit <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/knowyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER>

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon.

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Farm Safety

Summer is an exciting and hectic time on (insert County name) farms. (Insert county name) FSA employees care about our customers, and want to remind them to practice farm safety.

Remember to: Walk around machinery and check shields and guards; make sure the PTO's master shield is in place; make sure Slow Moving Vehicle signs are on machinery. If you are taking medicine, take it at the appropriate time and eat on schedule. If you are working in grain bins know that flowing grain can kill, and it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped. Try not to work alone in bins or confined spaces, and if that's not possible let someone know where you are by checking in regularly by cell phone.

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) offers the following safety tips for farmers:

- Educate yourself on farm equipment. Read and follow instructions according to the equipment's manuals about safety.
- Conduct regular equipment inspections.
- Don't wear loose clothing while entering confined spaces such as grain bins, silos and hoppers as this can prevent entanglements.
- Install Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors.
- Use seat belts while operating tractors with a ROPS. Do not allow additional passengers on the tractor with you.
- While operating tractors and other farm equipment, be very cautious on rural roadways.
- Use protective gear when operating machinery: Be familiar with hazardous chemicals. Take extra precaution when handling chemicals such as anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane gas and hydrogen sulfide.
- Consistently educate your family and co-workers about safety practices, especially children.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a Microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

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).