



# Isabella County News

(February) 2012

Issue No. 01

## Isabella County FSA USDA Service Center

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Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858  
989-772-5927 ext. 2  
989-773-0480 ( fax)

### Web Sites

www.fsa.usda.gov  
www.sc.egov.usda.gov  
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

### Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### County Committee

Joyce Conners, Chair  
John Kampf, Vice Chair  
Beth Bryant, Member

### Staff

Becky Dickman, FP-PT  
Connie Moeggenborg, FP-PT  
Heather Hadder, FP-PT  
Colleen Schuldt, FLP-PT  
Jerry Spickerman, FLM  
Wayne Stickler, Acting CED

### Dates to Remember

**March 12<sup>th</sup>** – CRP Signup Begins  
**March 15<sup>th</sup>** - NAP Application Deadline  
**April 6<sup>th</sup>** – CRP Signup ends.  
**May 28<sup>th</sup>** – Office Closed (Memorial Day)  
**June 1st** – Last day for DCP/ Acre sign-up  
**June 30<sup>th</sup>** – Deadline to certify Fall planted crops  
**July 15<sup>th</sup>** – Deadline to Certify Spring planted crops



## General CRP Signup To Begin

Enrollment in the 43<sup>rd</sup> general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will begin March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The deadline to submit bids for potential 10 or 15 year general CRP contracts is **April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012**. This program is voluntary, but competitive, and is available to all agricultural landowners and/or producers. To be eligible the land offered must be cropland which was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in at least 4 of 6 years from 2002 to 2007.

## CREP Still Available

Landowners and/or producers still have an opportunity to enroll into the CREP, which is a continuous signup for highly sensitive soils. Installation of certain specific practices such as windbreaks, wetland restorations, and filter strips not only earn higher annual payments on accepted acreage but other cash incentives.

## NEW SAFE CRP Opportunity

Isabella FSA announces a new CRP initiative, State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). The program was the result of an agreement between USDA, wildlife management agencies, conservation and commodity groups -such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Diverse grassland planting consists of a mixture of planted short or tall native grasses and wildflowers. A subset of the short grass planting is a savanna, which includes scattered clumps of planted oak trees.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for this SAFE practice the land must be located in the SAFE focus area. The land must have a cropping history (4 out of 6 years from (2002-2007), and be either a block of 30 acres or greater in size or, if a linear habitat, must at least be a minimum of 200 feet wide and 10 acres or greater in size.

## FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

*Farm Ownership or Farm Operating Loans* may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. *Guaranteed Loans* can reach a maximum indebtedness level of \$1,094,000. *Emergency Loans* are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by either a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. *Rural Youth Loans, Socially Disadvantaged Loans, and Beginning Farmer Loans* are also available.

For detailed information on available loan programs and eligibility requirements, please call the FSA office.

### Selected Interest Rates for February 2012

Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.375
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.375
Limited Resource Loans	5.000
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500
Emergency Loans (Actual Loss)	3.750
Farm Storage Facility Loans 7 yr	1.375
Farm Storage Facility Loans 10yr	2.00
Farm Storage Facility Loans 12 yr	2.250
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.375

## DCP/ACRE Sign-up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment runs from Jan. 23, 2012 through June 1, 2012. Here are some IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1<sup>st</sup> in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
  - Ownership changes
  - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
  - Change in crop shares arrangements
  - Farm yield information is due to the FSA Office by July 15<sup>th</sup> for all ACRE enrolled farms.

**Note:** Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

## Important Requirement

Farm Service Agency is partnering with the Internal Revenue Service to reduce fraud in farm programs and streamlining payment limits for family farmers.

**To earn 2012 program benefits a CCC-931 form must be filed with our office to be forwarded to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**

All entities, members of entities and individuals must submit form CCC-931. This is to ensure that payments are not issued to producers whose adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 non-farm Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

## COC ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to Beth Bryant for being elected to the Isabella County FSA Committee as representative of LAA-1. Beth has served the Isabella County FSA well in the recent past as a Committee Advisor.

## Wetland Compliance

If you plan on clearing, draining, dredging or tile maintenance of any kind, you need to file an AD-1026 with our office before you begin. Failure to do so could result in the loss of USDA benefits.

## Sodbuster Regulations

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

## Crop Reporting

All cropland acres **must** be reported to FSA to receive benefits for the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (**DCP**); Acreage Crop Revenue Election (**ACRE**); Marketing Assistance Loans, including potential LDP's; Non-insured Assistance Program (**NAP**); Conservation Reserve Program (**CRP**) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (**CREP**). Crop and land use reports must account for all cropland or contract acreage on an FSA farm, whether idle or planted. **Annual payments cannot be issued until a proper crop and land use report is on file.**

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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 20250-9410, or call toll-free (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If such accommodations are required, please contact Wayne Stickler at (989) 772-5927 ext. 2**