



# NEWSLETTER



- GOVDELIVERY CUSTOMERS ARE NOT IMPACTED BY THE HEARTBLEED BUG
- USDA ANNOUNCES THE EXTENSION OF THE MILK INCOME LOSS CONTRACT PROGRAM FOR 2014
- SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM SIGN-UP PERIOD FOR 2012 CROP LOSSES BEGINS
- USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) SIGN-UP
- UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF GRAIN
- CROP INSURANCE INFORMATION
- 2013 ACRE
- GUARANTEED LOAN ELIGIBILITY
- USDA SETS DATE FOR SOYBEAN REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM
- HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE

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## Jackson County FSA Updates

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### Jackson County FSA Office

211 W. Ganson St. Jackson, MI 49201-1241

Phone: 517-789-7716 Ext. 2  
Fax: 855-647-4852

[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**Office Hours:**  
Monday-Friday  
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

**County Executive Director:**  
Tamela Smith

**Program Technicians:**  
Rhonda Sauber  
Susan Gray  
Amy Doxtader

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Russell Lafollette  
517-849-9890

**Farm Loan Officer:**  
Crystal Hepker 517-849-9890

**Next County Committee Meeting:** To Be Determined

### GOVDELIVERY CUSTOMERS ARE NOT IMPACTED BY THE HEARTBLEED BUG

GovDelivery customer subscriptions are not affected by the Heartbleed bug. This bug has caused major security concerns among users of cloud technology. The Heartbleed bug refers to a flaw in an encryption tool used on the Internet that can expose data that is meant to be hidden.

Your GovDelivery account and information is safe. Nothing in the GovDelivery network architecture is affected by this bug.

You can find out more about the Heartbleed bug at <http://heartbleed.com>.

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### USDA ANNOUNCES THE EXTENSION OF THE MILK INCOME LOSS CONTRACT PROGRAM FOR 2014

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced the extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which protects dairy farmers against income loss through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers (MPP) is operational.

Contracts for eligible producers enrolled in MILC on or before Sept. 30, 2013, are automatically extended until the termination date of the MILC program. Dairy operations with approved MILC contracts will continue to receive monthly payments if a payment rate is in effect.

MILC compensates enrolled dairy producers when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt), after adjustment for the cost of dairy feed rations. MILC payments are calculated each month using the latest milk price and feed cost, just as in the 2008 Farm Bill. The payment rate for October 2013 through January 2014 marketing's is zero. Payment rates during the months after January 2014 until the termination of the MILC program will be determined as the appropriate data becomes available.

Producers who want to select a different production start month must visit their local FSA office between April 14, 2014, and May 30, 2014.

FSA will provide producers with information on program requirements, updates and sign-ups as the information becomes available.

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## **SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM SIGN-UP PERIOD FOR 2012 CROP LOSSES BEGINS**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that sign-up begins today for 2012 crop losses under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program. The program, established by the 2008 Farm Bill, provides for one final period of eligibility for producers suffering crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011, for crops intended for 2012 harvest.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm or ranch must have:

- At least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance resulting from a disaster occurring on or before Sept. 30, 2011. A crop of economic significance contributes at least five percent of the expected revenue for a producer's farm. Additionally, the crop must also meet the following eligibility criteria:
- The crop must be considered a 2012 crop which means, in general, that the crop was intended for harvest in 2012;
- For insured crops, the coverage period must have begun on or before Sept. 30, 2011;
- For crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Assistance Program, the coverage period must have begun on or before Sept. 30, 2011;
- The final planting date, according to the specific coverage for the crop, must have been on or before Sept. 30, 2011.

Note: A producer who only plants fall seeded or spring seeded crops with a final planting date on Oct. 1, 2011 or later) cannot meet the above eligibility criteria and will not be eligible for the 2012 SURE program.

- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for all economically significant crops;
- Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. A "farm" for SURE purposes means the entirety of all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted or harvest for normal commercial sale or on-farm livestock feeding, including native and improved grassland intended for haying.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage. Farmers and ranchers interested in signing up must do so before the August 29th, 2014, deadline. For more information on the 2012 SURE program, visit any USDA Service Center or online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/sure](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure).

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## **USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) SIGN-UP**

As of Tuesday, April 15, 2014, orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

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## **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.

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## **CROP INSURANCE INFORMATION**

Changes to regulations now allows FSA to provide one (1) copy of producers FSA-578, acreage reports to crop insurance agents. Policy states that Crop Insurance Agents may request copies of FSA-578 data and map photocopies as well as FSA-578 producer prints and maps. HOWEVER, the request for these documents must be completed on (REVISED FORM) FSA-426 by the Crop Insurance Agent and accompanied with 1 or more of the following:

- Producer signed policy document
- Producer signed transfer/application policy document
- Schedule of Insurance
- Notice of Acceptance/Policy Confirmation
- Summary of Insurance Protection
- Signed statement from the producer authorizing release of documents to the named crop insurance company and/or agent.

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## **2013 ACRE**

Participation in 2013 ACRE requires production reports for planted acres that must be submitted for the covered commodities and peanuts planted on the farm by July 15, 2014. Failure to report production for those covered commodities and peanuts planted on ACRE farms may result in contract termination. If the contract is terminated, all payments, including direct payments previously received plus interest will be required to be refunded.

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## **GUARANTEED LOAN ELIGIBILITY**

Changes to FSA regulations have removed Guaranteed Operating Loan term limits. Previous and current guaranteed loan borrowers who were not eligible for further guaranteed loans due to the previous 15 year eligibility term limit may now be eligible for further guaranteed loans through their commercial lender.

The Farm Service Agency loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program is \$1,355,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness is \$1,655,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact their local FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

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## **USDA SETS DATE FOR SOYBEAN REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM**

USDA will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act).

Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate. To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from FSA county offices starting on May 5, 2014 through May 30, 2014. Forms are also available on the [AMS website](#). Producers who don't participate in FSA programs can still request a referendum at the FSA county office where they own or rent land.

Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA county office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014. If returned by mail, it must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Notice of the Request for Referendum will be published in the March 4, 2014, Federal Register. For more information, visit the [AMS website](#) or contact James Brow, Research and Promotions Branch; Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0251 - Room 2610-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; tel. (202) 720-0633.

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## **HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website regarding [Conservation Compliance](#).

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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).