

April 2013



Lenawee County FSA Updates

Lenawee County FSA Office

1100 Sutton Rd

Adrian MI 49221

Phone: 517-263-7400

Fax: 517-265-9121

County Executive Director:

Constance Reid Guffey

Program Technicians:

Debra Shiels Ext 105

Jessica Mullins 125

Barbara Wagner 107

Beth Wagner 106

Jamie Wegner 104

Farm Loan Manager:

Michael Jordon

County Committee Advisor Named

Stephanie Thompson of Blissfield has been named as County Committee Advisor for 2013. As the COC Advisor she will be a voice for under-represented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers in the community. County Committee members and their County Executive Directors, reach out to groups to ensure that all land owners, operators and persons sharing in crops, are aware of FSA programs and the County Committee election system.

Advisors serve for a 12-month period not to exceed nine consecutive years. They attend each COC meeting, including executive sessions and they participate. One of their primary responsibilities is to increase awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections. They help develop interest for socially disadvantaged group members to consider FSA work as a career. Advisors also solicit candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the COC election process.

Bonnie Shepherd of Adrian served as COC Advisor for the previous five years. Thank you to Bonnie for her service and dedication.

Important Reminder of Sodbuster and Swampbuster Provisions

Most USDA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on highly erodible land planted to an annual crop, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. Farm owners and operators are reminded that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility for USDA programs. Before producers

Farm Loan Officer:

Rebecca Deline

Program Technicians:

Brenda Andrews 113

Jodie Johnson 112

Committee Members:

Michael Feight

Genie Hillard

Dale Terry

Stephanie Thompson,

COC Advisor

clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file form AD-1026 in this office, indicating the area to be brought into production. If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates that the area is highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage before bringing land into production. Be sure to have an HEL determination made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits back to the year of conversion. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers come into the FSA office ahead of time to file form AD-1026 for referral to NRCS. **It is necessary for NRCS to review any actions which could result in the modification of an area determined to be a wetland.** This includes any clearing of trees or brush (including fence rows), draining, dredging, filling, or plans to install, maintain or improve tile. Keep eligible for USDA benefits. Do not assume an action such as clearing stumps or tiling a small area does not matter – it does matter. File the form first and make an informed decision. Producers are to notify the Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and repayment of benefits back to the year of the wetland conversion.

Let us know right away if you want to or have done some clearing, so NRCS can make a determination. Don't risk your benefits.

Outreach to Women and New Producers

Perhaps you have recently become involved in farming, or have been involved in farming for years with your spouse, but you want to learn more about FSA programs?

Do you want to better understand the benefits or requirements of a program? Do you want to know what we offer specifically for "Beginning Farmers"? Do you want to be more informed on the County Committee election process and be more involved? Please join us for informal meetings, especially for you, on any first Wednesday of the month from 9:00 -10:00 a.m. The topics will vary depending on your interests. There will be an informal presentation and discussion. Please call 263-7400 and press 2. Ask what the topic for the next meeting will be and let us know if you want to reserve a spot.

Electronic Services Available

With Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/ followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification. If you would like assistance establishing your account, just contact us.

MAEAP: What it is and why it's Valuable

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is a confidential and voluntary program for farms of any size or commodity. Aiding Michigan's producers in risk assessment and proactive planning to meet Right to Farm Generally Accepted Agriculture Management Practices, while preventing pollution and providing technical assistance, are the program's main goals. MAEAP acknowledges that no farm is exactly like the next, and designed the program into systems to meet unique operation needs. With the help of your county MAEAP Technician, you can move through the three-phase structure, and develop an action plan specific to your establishment.

Cost-effectiveness is a high priority for MAEAP. With a unique fund code, producers working towards verification are eligible to apply for an exclusive MAEAP EQIP funding pool. This is a great opportunity for producers with one or two action items preventing them from verification, to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and rank higher in the EQIP application process. Additionally, thanks to support from Governor Rick Snyder, if a farm is MAEAP verified and has an accidental discharge and the farmer performs due diligence in notifying and addressing the spill, the farm will only be responsible for natural resource damage and not civil fines and penalties. The farm's discharge history will be taken into account.

For more information on MAEAP, visit www.maeap.org or call your local Conservation District. Your local NRCS can answer questions regarding EQIP.

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).