



January 2009



Mason-Oceana-Lake-Manistee County News

USDA Service Center

Mason-Oceana-Lake-Manistee County FSA
655 N. Scottville Rd.
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Hours

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

Office Staff

Kathi Lerg, CED
Debbie Schulz, PT
Beth Areklet, PT
Sarah Slater, PT
Pat Fricke, PT

Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean, FLM

County Committee

Eric Herrygers, Chairman
John LaPointe, V. Chair
Curtiss Berndt
James Bush
Chuck Schade

Advisor

Shirley Mallison

Website

www.fsa.usda.gov

New Committee Members Elected

Congratulations to Charles Schade and James Bush. Charles was re-elected to represent farmers from Amber, Custer, Eden, Hamlin, Pere Marquette, Riverton and Summit Townships in Mason County. James was re-elected to represent farmers from Pentwater, Weare, Golden, Hart, Benona, Shelby, Claybanks and Grant Townships in Oceana County.

The election results for Local Administrative Area (LAA) #3 are:

Charles Schade	Elected To COC
Robert Thurow	1 st Alternate to COC

The election results for Local Administrative Area (LAA) #4 are:

James Bush	Elected to COC
John Kessler	1 st Alternate to COC

The Committee members will hold their organizational meeting on January 13, 2009 to determine who will serve as the County Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Payment Limitation and Eligibility

For 2009 programs the average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limits have changed.

- For Non farm AGI of more than \$500,000 there will be no eligibility for price support or DCP
- For farm AGI of more than \$750,000 there will be no eligibility for direct payments for DCP
- If AGI is more than \$1 million there will be no eligibility for conservation programs unless 66.66% is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.
- If Non Farm AGI is more than \$1 million there will be no eligibility for conservation program benefits.

Payment Limitation Controls will be established in 2009 which will credit individuals and entities with both the amount of payments they receive directly and also the amount they are considered to have received indirectly by holding an interest in an entity receiving payment.

Please allow additional time during DCP sign-up, these changes will require new eligibility forms for every producer receiving 2009 program benefits.

Power of Attorney

Due to the changes in the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions and programs being offered by the USDA, new power of attorney (POA) forms may need to be completed. If you are acting as a POA, please contact the office to determine if a new form is required.





Appointments Recommended

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office.



2009 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program

Sign up for the 2009 DCP program began December 22, 2008 and continues through June 1, 2009.

Please report any changes to your farming operation so that we can keep your records current. This includes changes in land ownership or operators.

If you are operating the same land, do you have a current signed lease from the landowner? A signed rental agreement or landowner's signature on the DCP contract will be a requirement for 2009 DCP contracts.

All farmers who produce a crop on base acres are entitled to a share in the payment. Landowners who do not have a risk or interest in the crop are not eligible to receive DCP payments.

If some of your lease agreements for 2008 have expired, it may be a good time to get new signed leases for crop years 2009 and beyond.

Bank Account Changes/Direct Deposit and WEB Based Payment System

It is now more important than ever to be sure you have a direct deposit on file in our office. Any changes to your account need to be reported to the county office promptly to **avoid possible payment delay**.

FSA has moved to a new WEB based payment system which means all payments will be issued from the web and will transmit from Kansas City. If you do not have a direct deposit form on file you will receive a check which may take anywhere from seven to ten days after approval before it is mailed from Kansas City.

Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes ACRE program payments. Beginning with the 2009 crop year, producers will have the option to participate in a state-level revenue protection program instead of the counter-cyclical program.

In crop years 2009 through 2012, producers who make an irrevocable election to receive ACRE Program payments will:

1. Not receive counter-cyclical payments on enrolled farms.
2. Be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.
3. Be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.

If actual state per acre revenue is less than the guarantee and if a producer suffers an actual revenue loss for the crop on the farm, then the producer will receive an ACRE payment equal to the difference between the state per-acre revenue guarantee and the state actual revenue calculation paid on 83.3 percent (85 percent for 2012) of the acres planted to the covered commodity on the farm.

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!!! The 2008 Farm Bill appropriated funds for the following Supplemental Disaster Programs: Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP), and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). **For producers to be eligible they must purchase at least the CAT level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for non-insurable crops on all crops in all counties.**

For the SURE Calculator go to:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>
Under the *Tools* section.



Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact this County Office in person or by phone.

MILC

The Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program began December 22, 2008, and extends thru September 30, 2012. MILC payments are made when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight. The maximum eligible pounds through fiscal year 2011 is 2,985,000 pounds. In fiscal year 2012 the maximum is 2.4 million pounds. New payment eligibility forms will be required for all. Call ahead for an appointment or to request the necessary forms be sent to you. There is no payment rate for January 2009.

Non Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

NAP policy holders are reminded that they must submit form FSA-576 "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you notice that your crop might be light due to spring frosts or hail, contact the office immediately so that we have the opportunity to take a look at your crop. Failure to do so could result in loss of NAP benefits.

Once you have filed a notice of loss, you will need to keep us informed of your harvest decisions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of the acreage, an appraisal will need to be completed on the un-harvested acreage. If your loss is on a hand harvested or U-pick crop, this must be appraised even if all is harvested. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Remember we need to know the total pounds harvested from previous years in order to establish your actual production history (APH). Your APH is used to calculate your loss payment. This production evidence must be supplied to this office by **July 15, 2009**.

The final deadline to report fruit and vegetable crops is also **July 15, 2009**. It is the producer's responsibility to report all crop acreage. Failure to report acreage could result in denial of NAP benefits. Fruit producers must **report any changes to orchards** by this date and sign a 2009 FSA-578 to meet this provision. Those that have no changes may contact the office as soon as possible to report their 2009 crop acreage.

Remember **March 15, 2009** is the deadline to purchase NAP coverage and Crop insurance on most annually planted crops. It is a requirement, for producers who wish to participate in the Supplemental Disaster Programs, to have crop insurance or NAP coverage on ALL CROPS.

New 2009 NAP rates have increased to \$250.00 per crop, \$750.00 per county, and \$1,875.00 per producer for all counties.

Transfer of Farm's Administrative County

A change in a farm's administrative county may be permitted to a contiguous county that currently has an FSA office without completing a farm combination in the receiving county if at least 1 of the following applies:

- the principal dwelling of the farm operator has changed
- a change has occurred in the operation of the land
- there has been a change that would cause the changed administrative County Office to be more accessible, such as a new highway, relocation of the County Office, building site, etc.
- the producer documents that the changed administrative County Office is **significantly** more convenient.

In and out transfer shall be:

- signed by the farm operator and **all** owners
- a 1-time option for the producer if done because of convenience (If this option is elected the transferring producer has used **their** 1 time option for the farm)
- made only to a county that currently has an FSA office and is contiguous to the county where the farm is physically located.

Note: Owners and operators shall be aware that transferring a farm can affect their eligibility to vote in specific County Committee elections.

*We Hope you had a Very
 Merry Christmas and Wish you
 a Prosperous New Year!*



**2008 Wool/Mohair &
 Unshorn Pelts**

The final loan availability date to request a marketing assistance loan or LDP for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts is January 31, 2009.

Debbie Pat Beth Sarah Kelli



Dates to Remember	
Jan. 19 th	Office Closed for the Observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
Feb. 16 th	Office Closed for the Observance of Presidents Day
March 15 th	NAP deadline on annually planted crops
June 1 st	DCP signup deadline
June 30 th	Reporting deadline for fall planted small grains
July 15 th	Reporting deadline for most crops. Deadline to submit production records for NAP APH's.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

Visit our Web site at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

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