



www.fsa.usda.gov

**Mecosta County
USDA Service
Center**
18260 Northland Dr
Big Rapids, MI. 49307-9272
Telephone 231-796-2659 Ext. 2

County Committee

Mike Hopkins – Chairperson
John Orr – Vice Chairperson
Gerald Mondrella – Member
Beth Storey – Advisor

County Office Staff

Sherry Adams, Program Technician
Towna Aris, Program Technician
Shelley Lobert, Program Technician
Heather Sellers, Program Technician (Intermittent)
Larry Sheridan, Farm Loan Officer

Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean

County Executive Director

Travis Murray

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday – Friday
Closed All Federal Holidays

March 2009

Field Reporter

Don Foos

OUTREACH Meeting in Remus (See Agenda Inside)!

The FSA and MSU Extension will sponsor a outreach meeting titled “Managing Crop Risks in a Changing World” on March 5, 2009 at 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Wheatland Township Hall in Remus, Michigan. The purpose is to expose producers to vital information that will help reduce their financial risk when planting crops in these volatile markets.

County Committee Advisor Reappointed

Congratulations to Beth Storey! Beth was reappointed to the Mecosta County Committee as the advisor by the FSA State Committee of Michigan. She will be starting her 7th term as the County Committee advisor.

DCP Signup Underway

The 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) Program sign up for farms with base acres has begun. You can signup at your local USDA service center or online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp. Signup continues through June 1, 2009. **FSA will not accept any late-filed applications after June 1, 2009.**

NEW DISASTER PROGRAMS

The new Farm Bill has provided continuous disaster programs which are:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program (*Crop disaster*)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP),
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)

To be eligible to participate in the SURE and/or LFP programs for **2009**, the producer must have bought crop insurance for all crops which are insurable and NAP coverage for entire farm coverage (excluding pasture and crops which are 5% or less in economic value) for the crop year. The deadline to purchase crop insurance for spring planted crops (2009) is fast approaching, please contact the office for a list of these crops. For crops which are non-insurable, we encourage you to purchase NAP coverage through the FSA office as soon as possible. NAP coverage takes affect 30 days after signing up for the policy. The cost to purchase NAP for 2009 is \$250.00 per crop, maximum of \$750.00 per county, \$1875.00 per producer for all counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

Example: Mecosta County Producer Gene Sickels buys crop insurance (by March 15, 2009) for his corn and soybeans for 2009 but he does not buy insurance coverage (by fall of 2008) for his 2009 alfalfa ground.

Mr. Sickels would not be eligible to participate in the SURE program through FSA for 2009, even if Mecosta County were eligible for disaster in 2009 and Mr. Sickels had an eligible loss in corn and soybeans.

If you have questions on this or any other program, please contact our office at (231) 796-2659 ext. 2.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

FSA Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent
Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc
- When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc
- FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents **not** approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- NAP actual production history and approved yield record
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase
- Financing statement
- UCC financing statement
- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities
- All members of a general partnership must sign for the general partnership unless an individual is authorized to act on the behalf of the general partnership and bind all members
- Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office
- Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity

MANAGING CROP RISKS IN A CHANGING WORLD

MARCH 5, 2009 1:00 PM TO 4:00 PM***

WHEATLAND TWP HALL REMUS, MICHIGAN

No Charge. No RSVP.

Sponsors: USDA Farm Service Agency and
Michigan State University Extension Service

Guest presenters: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
and GreenStone Farm Credit Services

AGENDA

- 1:00 pm **2009 Crop Budgets for Alfalfa, Canola, Corn, Oats, Soybeans, and Wheat**
Presenter: Jerry Lindquist, Mecosta County MSU Extension Director
- 1:30 pm **Risk Reduction through Conservation**
Presenter: Jennifer Taylor, Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist
- 1:40 pm **Lender of First Opportunity**
Presenter: Larry Sheridan, FSA Farm Loan Officer
- 1:50 pm **FSA Farm Bill Overview**
Presenter: Travis Murray, FSA County Executive Director
- 2:15 pm **Understanding and Using USDA Farm Programs ACRE and SURE to Reduce Your Cropping Risk**
Presenter: Curtis Talley Jr., MSU Extension Farm Management Educator
- 3:20 pm **Crop Insurance Options**
Presenter: Bryce Christensen, GreenStone Farm Credit Services
- 4:00 pm **Meeting Ends**

*** Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in meeting/event/function should contact Travis Murray at (231) 796-2659 extension 2, email: travis.murray@mi.usda.gov, or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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 percent 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.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting, or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Mecosta County FSA Office
18260 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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FINAL DEADLINES and DATES to REMEMBER

- *Ongoing Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program Sign up
- *March 5, 2009 FSA & MSU Extension Outreach meeting @ 1 p.m., Remus, Michigan***
- *March 9, 2009 Mecosta County Committee meeting at 9 a.m. at Mecosta Co. USDA Service Center***
- *March 16, 2009 Last day to buy Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for most 2009 spring planted crops.
- *June 1, 2009 Last day to sign up for Direct and Countercyclical Program (DCP) **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- *June 30, 2009 Last day to certify fall seed crops.
- *July 15, 2009 Last day to certify all other crops and CRP cover.

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FSA FARM LOANS

The Farm Service Agency makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who have experience and want to own or operate their own farm or ranch, but who don't meet the qualifications to get financing from a traditional lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.

Please, check with the FSA county office loan staff about loan eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.

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