



Mecosta County News

Mecosta County USDA Service Center

Mecosta County FSA
18260 Northland Dr.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
231-796-2659 ext. 2
231-796-3607 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours

Monday - Friday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed all Federal Holidays

County Committee

Mike Hopkins
John Orr
Jim Carmichael
Beth Storey (Advisor)

County Committee
normally meets
2nd Tuesday of the month
Starting @ 9:00 a.m.

Staff

Sherry Adams-PT
Towna Aris-PT
Shelley Lobert-PT
Heather Hadder-Intermittent
PT

Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean

County Executive Director

Travis Murray



Don't Miss the June 1st Deadline!

The 2010 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) Program and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program sign up for farms with base acres have begun. Signup continues through June 1, 2010. The June 1, 2010 deadline is mandatory for all participants. **FSA will not accept any late-filed applications after June 1, 2010. If you miss this deadline, you will not be eligible to receive any payment for these programs this year.**

You can save time and call ahead and we will do our best to have the paperwork ready when you arrive. If you are not farming the same land as last year, please let us know as soon as possible. If you can bring new leases in when you come, that will help expedite your signup. Advanced direct payments (22% of payment) are available upon request.

You can sign up at our office or online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov>. Then visit the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

**DON'T WAIT UNTIL
THE LAST MINUTE!
CALL AHEAD, SET AN
APPOINTMENT, AND
"GET 'ER DONE"!**

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM IS BACK!

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is back. This is a voluntary/competitive program designed to keep land in a grass cover for the entire period of the contract or for eternity, in the case of a life time easement. The land can be currently in grass but that is not a requirement. The land does not have to be currently in grass but can it does have to be cropland that will be planted to a grass within 12 months of being officially accepted into the program.

Signup is ongoing. Producers will be signing up to begin participation for the 2011 year. There are 2 ways to potentially participate: permanent easements and rental contracts (10, 15, and 20 year). The current proposed rate of payment for permanent easements for Mecosta County is a onetime payment of \$1975 per acre. The Mecosta County payment for rental rate for rental contracts is an annual payment of \$10 per acre. (Note rates can vary by physical county location of the land).

There are no size limits as far as acreage. This program is designed for producers who pasture. Grazing can occur on the land with a certified grazing plan. Haying can also occur on the GRP land (50% can be harvested with unlimited cuttings during the primary nesting season or 70% can be harvested with only one cutting during primary nesting). Cost share is also available, if needed, for restoration of grasses, fencing, etc... For land to be eligible for GRP, you must own the land (private or tribal), have mineral rights (for easements), and be willing to keep it in grass during the duration of your choice. We have had 6 producers who deal with the FSA office accepted or currently being accepted into the rentals and/or easements for this program. For more details, please call NRCS or FSA at (231) 796-2659 or NRCS in Osceola County (231) 832-2950.

Loans Available for Farm Storage Facilities

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program ensures producers have adequate capacity to store their harvested production. The FSFL Program provides low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants must provide a down payment of 15%, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85% of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10, or 12 years are available, depending on the loan size. Interest rates for each term rate are different. Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA office where the farm's records are maintained. A FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops – lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables – cold storage facilities.

Mecosta County Producers May be Eligible for SURE

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program, the 2008 Farm Bill's successor to prior ad hoc crop disaster programs, is officially open for applications. **Currently we are only taking applications for the 2008 crop year.**

For SURE, a "farm" is eligible when either: 1) a portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (**Mecosta County qualified in 2008**) or a contiguous county; **or** 2) the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production. **Note:** A "farm" refers to all crop acreage in all counties across the nation that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or farm livestock feeding. If farm eligibility criteria 1 or 2 is met, the producer must suffer a 10 percent revenue loss to at least one crop of economic significance on their farm in order to be eligible for SURE and it must be caused by a natural disaster. A crop of economic significance is one that contributes at least 5 percent of the expected revenue for a producer's farm.

For producers to be eligible for SURE, the producer must have obtained a **policy or plan of insurance for all crops** through either the Federal Crop Insurance Act or FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). There are limited exceptions to this rule, and SURE does not require coverage for forage crops intended for grazing. **Note:** Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged", "Limited Resource", or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher" do not have to meet this requirement. For the 2008 crop year, producers are not eligible if their average AGI is \$2.5 million or greater, unless 75% or more of their AGI is from agriculture. For 2009 and subsequent crop years, producers or legal entities whose average nonfarm income exceeds \$500,000 are not eligible. A limit of \$100,000 applies to the combination of payments from SURE and the livestock disaster programs - Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program

(LIP) and Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP). For 2008 SURE payments, payments are limited per "person" according to payment limitation rules in effect for 2008.

Needed for Signup:

- 1) Verifiable/Reliable acreage and production records, if not already provided for crop insurance purposes or FSA purposes. A producer can certify production, but if the producer is picked for a spot check, the producer will have to produce the verifiable/reliable production records.
- 2) Other information requested by FSA.

Unlike federal disaster programs in the past, the SURE program will look at all your crops and the price they should have received. Just because you had a significant loss on one crop financially, other crop revenues may offset those losses. This is a revenue base program that is a supplement to crop insurance.

Attention All Producers!!!

Participants who have or will receive a FSA or NRCS payment for the 2009 and/or 2010 years are subject to average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) rules. They must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the IRS by June 15, 2010 to avoid paying back program benefits received for those years. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms>

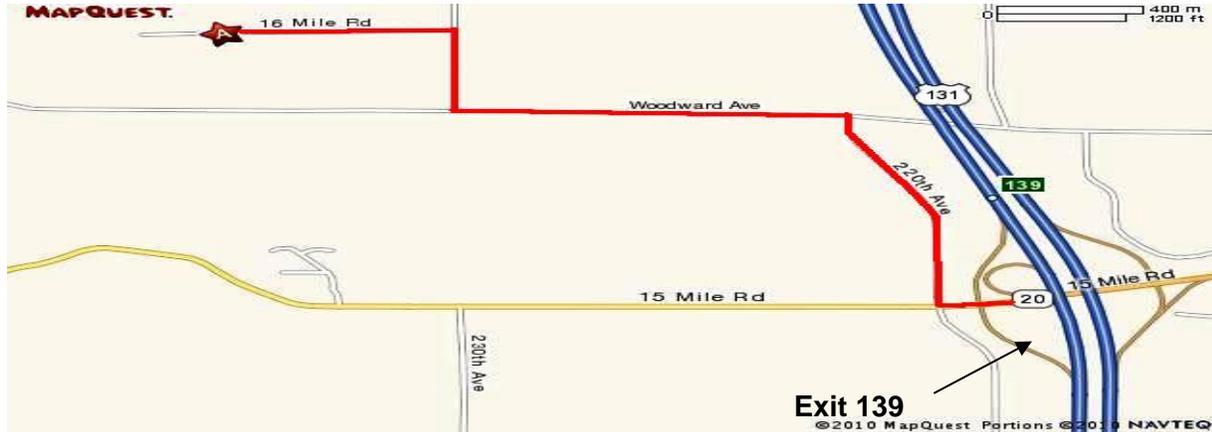
USDA Memorandum of Understanding with the IRS establishes an electronic information exchange to verifying compliance with the AGI provisions for farm programs. These forms provide the written consent of each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA. The agreement ensures payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.



Autumn Olive (Brush) Control Workshop



On May 7th NRCS will be hosting an autumn olive removal workshop just at 23380 16 Mile Rd, Big Rapids, MI 49307. The workshop will run from 10:00 am-12:00 pm and will feature contractors performing removal with different types of equipment as well as a presentation on herbicide use for control by Jerry Lindquist from Michigan State University Extension. For directions see the attached postcard. Please pass this information on to anyone who you think may be interested. If you have any questions feel free to contact either Jennifer Taylor or Ray Hummel at (231) 796-2659 ext.3



Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance Loans for crop years 2009 through 2012 are available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan even if you regain beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires you comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, report how you use cropland acreage on the farm and ensure that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans. The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Sodbuster, Swampbuster

Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all 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. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system. Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

Please Come in and Tell Us what You have Planted

We encourage you to come in and tell us what crops you have planted and the date you planted them just like we do every year. We encourage you to tell us as soon as you can. The deadline to certify fall seeded crops is June 30, 2010. All other crops(including CRP ground) must be certified by July 15, 2010. Please call and make an appointment.

Selected Interest Rates for APRIL 2010	
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.000%
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.	3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans 10yr.	3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans 12 yr	4.000%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.375%

Dates to Remember	
Ongoing	SURE (2008 Crop disaster)
May 7	Autumn Olive Removal Workshop
May 31	Federal Holiday, Office Closed
June 1	Deadline to sign up for DCP and ACRE (no late files)
June 8	Mecosta County Committee Meeting***
June 15	IRS (AGI Form) due to IRS
June 30	Deadline to certify fall seeded small grain crops
July 5	Federal Holiday, Office Closed
July 13	Mecosta County Committee Meeting*** Tentative
July 15	Deadline to certify all other planted crops and land enrolled in the CRP and GRP.
July 15	Deadline for 2009 ACRE Crop Production To be turned into FSA Office.
August 2	COC nomination deadline for LAA #2
September 30	Deadline to sign up for NAP coverage for Fall Planted Crops
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Ongoing	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program & CREP, and Grassland Reserve Program

STOREY Reappointed as Mecosta County Committee Advisor

Congratulations to Mrs. 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 8th term of providing excellent service to the producer of the Mecosta County area as the County Committee advisor. Thank you Beth for your willingness to continue to serve!

***** 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.**

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To file a complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.