

June 2014



# NEWSLETTER



- [Ottawa County Seeks A Representative For The County Committee](#)
- [Direct Loan Changes](#)
- [Save Time – Make An Appointment With FSA](#)
- [Farm Reconstitutions](#)
- [Special Accommodations](#)
- [FSA Signature Policy](#)
- [Controlled Substance](#)

## Ottawa County FSA Updates

### Ottawa County FSA Office

16731 Ferris Street  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: 616-842-5852  
Fax: 855-647-4848

**County Executive Director:**  
Jayne VanNess

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Paul Wagner  
(616) 527- 2098

**Farm Loan Technician:**  
Sara Janson

**Program Technicians:**  
Jacquelyn French  
Andrew Stille

**County Committee Members:**  
David Pyle - Chair  
Mark Berens - V Chair  
William Miller - Member  
Helen Dietrich - Advisor

**Next County Committee Meeting:** August 6th @ 9:00am

### Ottawa County Seeks a Representative for the County Committee

County Committee (COC) elections provide farmers and ranchers the opportunity to represent producers in their community by serving on their local FSA COC. All farmers and ranchers are encouraged to consider running for COC seats.

Significant emphasis continues to be placed on improving diversity on COC's. FSA is working diligently to increase the number of SDA farmers and ranchers nominated for COC using FSA-669A. State and County Offices have actively and successfully been able to place many more SDA candidates' names on ballots. Efforts must be continued and expanded to ensure that SDA farmers and ranchers have every opportunity for election to FSA COC's.

Elections this year will be held in the Local Administrative Area #2 consisting of the townships of; Grand Haven, Holland, Olive, Park, Port Sheldon, Spring Lake and Zeeland. Eligible persons may submit form FSA-669A, Nominating Petition to the County Office no later than August 1, 2014.

For more information regarding the County Committee System and/or election process please visit your local Farm Service Agency office or online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>

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## Direct Loan Changes

Changes were made to the interest rate charged on loans where FSA provides 50 percent or less on jointly financed purchases of real estate also called Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans. The interest rate will be the greater of 2.5 percent or the current interest rate for direct Farm Ownership loans minus 2 percent, as a fixed rate for the duration of the loan. At present, the June direct Farm Ownership rate is 4.00 percent. Because the 2.5 percent floor is greater than subtracting 2 percent from the current direct farm ownership loan rate, the rate for Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans in June is 2.50 percent.

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## Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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## Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution - or recon - is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon.

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

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## 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 the office staff directly or by calling Jayne A. Van Ness at (616) 842-5852.

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## FSA Signature Policy

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

- 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.
- Spouses must have a power of attorney on file, or sign personally, for price support loans and for promissory notes.
- When signing as an Agent, authorized by form FSA-211, producer must sign using a “By” or “For” comment as well as their representative capacity. For example “Josephine Farmer, by Joe Farmer, Agent”. If the signatory is preprinted on the document, the agent does not have to repeat the name; they may simply sign “By Joe Farmer, Agent”.
- Members of businesses, who have authorization to sign for the business, must sign using a “By” or “For” comment, unless preprinted on the document. For example, “ABC Corporation, By Joe ABC, President” or “Joe ABC, for ABC Corporation.”

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## Controlled Substance

Any person 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.

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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).