



# St. Joseph County News

St. Joseph County  
USDA Service Center

St. Joseph County FSA  
693 E Main Street  
Centreville, MI 49032  
269-467-6336 (phone)  
269-467-4356 (fax)  
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
James Struble  
Timothy Wagner  
Daniel Sharp  
Ann Kauffman

St. Joseph County  
Committee meets  
the third Wednesday of the  
month at 7:30 a.m.

**Staff**  
Gayle Britten, PT  
Michelle Fambro, PT  
Carol Fetterolf, PT  
Dana Sherman, PT  
Phillip DeYoung, FLM  
Sharon Hoch, CED

**COC ELECTION**  
Eligible voters in  
Leonidas, Lockport,  
Mendon, Nottawa, and  
Park Townships - Don't  
forget to return your  
election ballot before  
December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Also, anyone who is  
interested in being an  
advisor to the Commit-  
tee, contact our office.



## SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SURE)

**BACKGROUND**  
SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster. It is the 2008 Farm Bill's successor to the prior Ad Hoc Crop Disaster Programs also known as the CDP or Crop Disaster Programs. Unlike the prior USDA Disaster Programs, SURE is legislated through 2011. For SURE program purposes, a "farm" refers to all acreage in all counties that is planted or intended to be planted to crops that are for sale by the producer, and all hay crops.

**ELIGIBLE FARMS**  
SURE payments are available to producers on farms that are located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or in a contiguous county OR the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production. In order to receive payments, the farm must suffer at least a 10% eligible production loss on at least one crop of economic significance.

**ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS**  
For a producer to be eligible for the SURE Program, **all** of the farming operation's crops (planted or intended) that are of economic significance must be covered by either Federal Crop Insurance (CI) or FSA's Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage. Coverage must also be obtained for other crops for which CI or NAP is available, such as nursery, honey, aquaculture, and floriculture. However, coverage for grazed crops is not required for SURE.

## SURE, continued

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher do not have to meet the RMPR requirement.

**PAYMENT CALCULATION**  
Producers with qualifying losses are eligible to receive 60% of the difference between the SURE Disaster Program Guarantee and the actual Farm Revenue.

**DISASTER PROGRAM GUARANTEE**  
The guarantee is determined by totaling the calculated guarantee for each crop. For insured crops, the guarantee is based on the level of coverage the producer has elected. Higher levels of coverage will result in higher crop guarantees. For NAP crops, the guarantee is based on a formula that includes the yield, acreage, and price factors. The farm's Disaster Program guarantee cannot exceed 90% of the expected revenue for the farm.

**TOTAL FARM REVENUE**  
Included in the Total Farm Revenue calculation are estimated crop value, CI indemnities, NAP payments, Market Assistance Loan proceeds, other disaster payments, DCP payments (15% of direct payments, plus all CC payments and ACRE payments).

**SURE CALCULATOR**  
To assist farmers and ranchers in evaluating their options with SURE, USDA has created a SURE Calculator. **Note that to qualify for SURE, producers need to obtain CI or NAP on all crops in all counties in all states.** To utilize the Calculator, visit the FSA website ([www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)). Under "I Want to..." in the upper right corner, click on "View Farm Bill Information."



## **FSA FARM LOANS**

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank or other 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. If you are having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, terms and use of proceeds.

## **IMPORTANT!!**

Contact our office **BEFORE** you create new drainage systems or conduct land leveling, filling, dredging, land clearing, excavation, or stump removal.

## **2010 DCP/ACRE SIGNUP**

We know how busy you are, so in an effort to serve you better, we are setting up appointments for the DCP/ACRE signup. You will receive a postcard telling you the date and time of your appointment. If this time does not work for you, please call our office to reschedule. This will allow us to have your information gathered for your appointment and we will be ready to wait on you when you arrive.

Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) payments are computed using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. Eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. USDA will issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2009. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price.

The optional Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For the 2010 crop, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3 percent (85 percent in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the State ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

## **DCP/ACRE SIGNUP CONT.**

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

**The June 1, 2010, deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.**



## **NEED MONEY??**

You can request a 9-month loan from our office, using your 2009-crop as collateral. The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorizes nonrecourse marketing assistance loans (MAL) and loan deficiency payments (LDP) and makes them available for the 2008-2012 crops of wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, graded wool, nongraded wool, mohair, honey.

MALs and LDPs are marketing tools available to producers beginning upon harvest or shearing. The MAL provides an influx of cash when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows, which allows the producer to delay the sale of the commodity until more favorable market conditions emerge. Allowing producers to store production at harvest or shearing provides for a more orderly marketing of commodities throughout the year.

**The current interest rate is 1.375%.**

## **Producer Eligibility**

To be eligible for a MAL or LDP, the producer must:

- comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements;
- submit an acreage report to account for all cropland on the farm;
- have and retain beneficial interest in the commodity until the MAL is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity;
- meet adjusted gross income limitations.

## NAP

The Noninsured-Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters.

Eligible producers must apply for coverage of non-insurable crops and pay the applicable service fees by the application closing date for each crop.

The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50% of the expected production based on the approved yield and reported acreage.

NAP coverage is required in order for producers on that farm to be eligible for most of the current disaster programs.

## MAJOR CHANGES TO THE FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN (FSFL) PROGRAM!

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 made the following major changes to the FSFL Program, effective August 17, 2009:

- adds eligible FSFL commodities including fruit and vegetable cold storage facilities, hay and renewable biomass
- adds FSFL terms of 10 and 12 years
- authorizes one partial disbursement
- increases the maximum FSFL amount to \$500,000 per FSFL
- allows borrowers to increase the required down payment from 15 percent to 20 percent to negate the requirement for a severance agreement
- increases the non-refundable FSFL application fee to \$100 per eligible borrower.

Fruits and vegetables (FAVs) have been added as eligible FSFL commodities and cold storage facilities as eligible structures. FAVs eligible for cold storage facilities include, but are not limited to: apples, blueberries, asparagus, cabbage, grapes, potatoes, watermelons, pumpkins and squash. Controlled atmosphere storage structures are **not** eligible for FSFL.

Hay is defined as a grass or legume that has been cut and stored, and includes commonly used grass mixtures and forage legumes. Grain legumes for hay are also included, and are defined as hay where the entire plant, including the seeds, is harvested at maturity and used for animal feed.

Renewable biomass is defined as any organic matter that is available on a renewable or recurring basis used for the production of energy in the form of heat, electricity, and liquid, solid or gaseous fuels. Renewable biomass includes crop residue, plants and trees excluding old growth timber, renewable plant materials (feed grains or other agricultural commodities), and vegetative waste material (wood waste and residues, food waste, yard waste).

## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR LIVESTOCK, HONEYBEES, AND FARM-RAISED FISH PROGRAM (ELAP)

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions. Losses must occur on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011.

Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honey bee, or farm-raised fish losses during:

- 2008 calendar year shall provide a notice of loss and file an application for payment no later than **December 10, 2009**.
- January 1, 2009 through September 10, 2009, shall provide a notice of loss no later than **December 10, 2009**, and an application for payment must be filed no later than **January 30, 2010**.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honey bee, or farm-raised fish losses during September 14, 2009 through December 31, 2009 shall file the following:

- A notice of loss no later than 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the producer
- An application for payment no later than **January 30, 2010**.
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There are **NO** late-filed provisions for ELAP.

## LOANS AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING & SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who: has operated a farm for not more than 10 years; will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm; agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training, and financial management program; and does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.



*Please report land changes to our office as soon as they occur – we are not notified by the courthouse when changes are recorded.*

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**LIVESTOCK FORAGE PROGRAM (LFP)**

LFP compensates eligible livestock producers for grazing losses suffered because of drought conditions that occurred from January 1, 2008, to October 1, 2011.

The following link provides a list of eligible LFP counties for calendar years 2008 and 2009:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=lf>

St. Joseph County is currently not eligible for LFP.

**YOUTH LOANS**

FSA can make loans to youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations. The maximum loan limit is \$5,000. To qualify, the youth must:

- Be between 10 and 20 years old
- Live in a town of less than 10,000
- Be unable to obtain a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work.

Applicants must also be capable of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor.



Dates to Remember	
Dec. 1	NAP sales closing date for honey and maple sap
Dec. 7	Last day to return County Committee election ballots to county office
Dec. 25	Office closed for Christmas
Jan. 1	New Year's holiday – office closed
Jan. 18	Office closed for Martin Luther King Jr holiday
Jan 31	Last day to request 2009-crop wool and mohair loans or LDPs
Feb 1	NAP sales closing date for onions
Mar 15	NAP sales closing date for many crops. Check with county office for a listing
Mar 31	Final date to request wheat loans or LDPs.

Visit our Web site at:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/mi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi)

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