

# 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**  
Timothy Wagner  
Ann Kauffman  
Daniel Sharp  
Sandra Russell

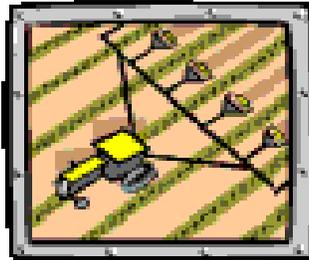
St. Joseph County  
Committee meets  
the third Wednesday of the  
month at 7:30 a.m.

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

**COC ELECTION**  
We are currently  
accepting nominations  
for a position on the  
County Committee.  
Eligible persons from  
Constantine, Fabius,  
Florence, Flowerfield,  
Mottville, and White  
Pigeon Townships may  
contact our office for a  
nominating petition.  
Also, anyone who is  
interested in being an  
advisor to the  
Committee, please  
contact our office.

## Crop Reporting Time Fast Approaching

The annual reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland acres on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from most farm programs, including:



- **Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program(DCP);**
- **Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE);**
- **Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments;**
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP);**
- **Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**
- **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE)**

Form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by:

- **June 30, 2010 for fall seeded small grain crops;**
- **July 15, 2010 for all crops, except fall seeded small grains.**

## **Foreign Buyer 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.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and 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 (FSA-153) 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.

## **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 county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

## **Bank Account Changes?**

All FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.



## **FARM LOAN PROGRAMS**

FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loans (OL) to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Our loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. Contact Phill DeYoung or Dana Sherman for more information.

### **IMPORTANT!!**

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

## **SURE**

Currently applications for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) are being taken for the 2008 Crop Year. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that were incurred starting in the crop year 2008 through September 30, 2011.

**To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops of economic significance in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage.** Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition,
- the crop of economic significance must be a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm,
- the farm experiencing the loss must be in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties. Those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are also eligible to receive SURE payments for production losses or crop quality losses.

Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sure\\_calculator\\_2008.xls](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sure_calculator_2008.xls). The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and Q & A are also available online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## **FSA Signature Policy**

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

## **CRP Land: Hope for beginning and minority farmers**

Michigan landowners who are willing to sell or lease Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning and minority farmers can get Federal cash with the Transition Incentives Program (TIP).

Signup for the new program, which began May 17, 2010, works this way: Contract Holders of land that has been idled under CRP can get two extra years of CRP payments from the USDA if they agree to sell or lease the acreage under a long-term contract to a beginning or minority farmer, provided the transition is not to a family member. To be eligible, TIP requires that the retired or retiring farmer or rancher:

- Have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is in the last year of the contract.
- Agree to allow the beginning or minority farmer to make conservation and land improvements.
- Agree to sell, or have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (a minimum of 5 years) the land under CRP contract to a beginning or minority farmer or rancher by Oct. 1 of the year the CRP contract expires.

## 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.

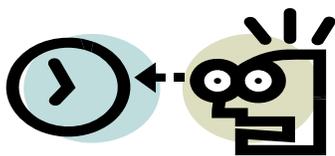
NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50% of the expected production based on the approved yield and reported acreage.

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

## Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in 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.

**Requests for recons must be filed by August 1st.**



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.

## Succession in Interest

If you have made any changes that affect your interest in base acres since you signed your last Direct and Counter-cyclical Program contract, you must report these *successions-in-interest* to the county committee by **Sept. 30**, so that a final determination can be made on who is eligible for the program on the farm.

Changes that qualify as a succession-in-interest include:

- A sale of land
- A change of operator or producer, including an increase or decrease in the number of partners
- A foreclosure, bankruptcy or involuntary loss of the farm
- A change in producer shares to reflect changes in the producer's share of the crop(s) that were originally approved on the contract.

If a succession-in-interest has taken place, you, as the “predecessor,” are required to refund any advance DCP payments you received for the affected base acres before a payment can be made to the “successor.”

Not reporting a succession-in-interest can result in contract termination and a loss of program benefits for ALL producers involved.

## COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS



Ann Kauffman was elected to the St.

Joseph County

Committee for 2010. Ann represents

Leonidas, Lockport, Mendon, Nottawa, and Park Townships.

Jim Struble reached his term limit after serving nine consecutive years on the County Committee. Thank you Jim, for your years of dedicated service to the farmers in St. Joseph County. Also, thanks to all who took the time to vote. Congratulations, Ann!

Call our office to make an appointment to report your crops.

Remember that you need to report planting dates.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Farm Storage Facility Loans

If you noticed you didn't have enough room to store your silage then maybe it is time for a new bunker. Did you know FSA's Facility Loan Program provides funding to finance bunkers and other facilities to store silage and high moisture corn? If interested, be sure to contact the office for details. It is important to remember that you cannot start any work on the site or have any material delivered until after your loan has been approved by FSA.

### TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Orchardists and nursery tree growers can apply for benefits under the Tree Assistance Program. **Anyone with losses suffered from 1-1-08 to 5-7-10 must submit an application and supporting documentation by 7-6-10.**

Eligible orchardists and nursery growers may receive TAP benefits to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines that were lost due to natural disasters. The program has been expanded to include Christmas tree and nursery tree growers that were ineligible before. Trees grown for pulp or timber or not grown for commercial purposes are not eligible.

Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before Oct. 1, 2011. Please contact our office to make an appointment, if you are interested.

Dates to Remember	
June 15	Deadline to submit CCC-927s and CCC-928s to IRS
June 30	Final date to certify fall-seeded crops
July 5	Office closed for Independence Day
July 15	Final date to report all crops other than fall-seeded
August 1	Final date to request a reconstitution
August 2	Last day to submit County Committee nomination forms to our office
Ongoing	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
Ongoing	State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program

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

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