



# 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  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

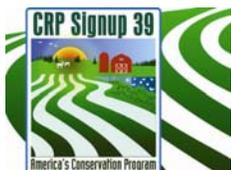
**County Committee**  
Timothy Wagner  
Ann Kauffman  
Daniel Sharp  
Sandra Russell

St. Joseph Co 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



We hope to see you at  
the fair!



## CRP General Signup 39

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the USDA's largest private-lands voluntary conservation program. CRP helps agricultural producers convert environmentally sensitive agricultural land to achieve conservation benefits. Certain practices are available on a continuous basis, however, it has been five years since the last competitive general CRP signup took place. Producers can offer land for CRP general signup August 2 through August 27, 2010.

To be eligible for CRP, the producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the close of the CRP signup, August 27, 2010. Land must be cropland which has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002-2007, and which is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa and other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for this year.

Benefits to CRP include:

- improved and increased wild-life habitat
- improved water quality
- increased soil quality
- reduce soil erosion
- increase air quality

In return for planting long-term resource conserving covers, FSA provides CRP participants annual rental payments, maintenance payments, cost-share and technical assistance.

Call our office for an appointment.

## Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) Signup Continues

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

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. A crop of economic significance is 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;
- Producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop production or 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.

## Power of Attorney

If you are too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here is a solution: retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing an FSA- 211, Power of Attorney form. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.ego.v.usdda.gov>.

Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.



## SURE continued

St. Joseph County **did** have a Secretarial Disaster declaration for 2008; therefore, producers who obtained crop insurance or NAP coverage on all crops of economic significance are eligible to apply for SURE. Signup is currently ongoing.

The deadline to submit a SURE application is September 30, 2010.

## ACRE Yield Data Deadline Extended

The deadline for 2009 production certification to comply with ACRE was extended until September 1, 2010. The extension is for completing both the farm benchmark yield (2004 through 2008) and the actual farm yield (2009). Participants in the 2009 ACRE program must certify their yields by September 1, 2010 to remain eligible for ACRE benefits.

## REMINDERS

Please remember to report any changes to our office, as they occur. We do not receive information from the Land Resource Office, so if you report land ownership changes to them, it is not relayed to us.

Report any farm changes – report any farming operation changes so that we can keep your records current. This includes changes in land ownership or operators. If the land in your operation hasn't changed do you have a signed lease from the landowner?

A signed rental agreement or the landowner's signature is required by 9/30/10.

Reconstitutions – changes that require farm reconstitutions should be reported as soon as possible, so we can update your records. Farm divisions should be considered when you do not have a firm lease. We cannot enroll a farm with changes pending, so please let us know of your changes as soon as possible.

## 2011 Signup

It is not too early to start thinking about the 2011 signup. If your landowners go South for the winter, try to get your updated leases before they leave. You can also bring in any new land ownership documentation, address changes, updated banking information, etc. This will allow us to update your records and get your payments out to you much more quickly.

Final 2010 DCP and ACRE payments will be issued in October, after receiving clearance from WDC.

Starting in November we will be sending out postcards again for appointments to sign up for the 2011 program.

## Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Policy holders are reminded that they must submit a "Notice of Loss" (FSA-576) within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop yields might be affected by adverse weather conditions, contact the office so that we have the opportunity to inspect your crop, before harvest.

If you are not going to harvest all or part of a block, an appraisal will need to be completed on that block. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Remember, we need to know the amount of crop sold from previous years in order to establish your actual production history (APH). Your APH is used to calculate your loss payment.

The following list shows upcoming deadlines to apply for NAP coverage. Contact our office for a list of all crops and their deadlines.

September 1: Christmas trees, floriculture, ornamental nursery, sod

September 30: alfalfa, canola, clover, grass, mixed forage, rye, speltz, wheat

November 20: apples, apricots, asparagus, blueberries, caneberrries, cherries, cranberries, grapes, peaches, pears, plums, rhubarb, strawberries.

# LOOKING FOR A FARM LOAN?

**FSA helps American Farmers and Ranchers get started – and keep going.**

## Special points of interest:

- *Loans delivered in a timely fashion*
- *Agriculture loans at low interest rates & extended repayment terms*
- *A wide range of financial products & services*
- *Experienced loan*

## Types of Farm Loans

Farm Real Estate

Farm Operating

Emergency Farm Loans

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers farm loan assistance to farmers and ranchers who have experience and want to own or operate their own farm or ranch, but who don't yet meet the qualifications to get financing from traditional lenders.

**FARM REAL ESTATE LOANS** funds can be used for the purchase of real estate, to make improvements, and to develop land to promote soil and water conservation. Interest rates are fixed and the loan term is up to 40 years.

**FARM OPERATING LOAN** funds must be re-paid in 1 to 7 years,

have a fixed rate, and can be used to finance all types of intermediate term capital.

**EMERGENCY FARM LOANS** provide assistance to help producers recover from production and physical losses caused by natural disasters or quarantine. The interest rate



is fixed at 3.75%. Please see the Emergency Designations listed in the table below.

**RURAL YOUTH LOANS** help rural youths, who are 10 to 20 years old establish and operate income producing projects.

## WHERE TO APPLY?

You can apply for direct loan assistance at any local FSA office. The office for St. Joseph County is located at 693 East Main Street, Centreville, MI. 49032, and is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. phone us at (269) 467-6336, or for more information go to our Web site at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## Disaster Declarations for St. Joseph County

<u>CODE &amp; DECLARATION DATE</u>	<u>DESIGNATION</u>	<u>FINAL DATE TO APPLY</u>
• S2972, 2/1/2010	Frost, freeze, excessive rain-fall	10/1/2010
• S2973, 2/1/2010	Freeze, frost, excessive snow, low temps, cold weather	10/1/2010
• S2974, 2/1/2010	Excessive rain, flooding, hail, lightning, tornadoes and high winds	10/1/2010
• S2975, 2/1/2010	Drought	10/1/2010
• N-1021	Tornadoes	2/25/2011

*We are currently seeking nominations for a County Committee Advisor. Please contact the office for more details.*

### Farm Safety

**Be careful.** St. Joseph County FSA employees care about our customers.

Remember to: Walk around machinery and check shields and guards; make sure the PTO's master shield is in place; make sure Slow Moving Vehicle signs are on machinery.

If you are taking medicine, take it at the appropriate time and eat on schedule.

If you are working in grain bins know that flowing grain can kill, and it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped. Try not to work alone in bins or confined spaces, and if that is not possible let someone know where you are by checking in regularly by cell phone.

### Civil Rights/Discrimination Process

As a participant or applicant for programs or activities operated or sponsored by USDA you have a right to be treated fairly. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or marital or familial status, you may file a discrimination complaint. The complaint should be filed with the USDA Office of Civil Rights within 180 days of the date you became aware of the alleged discrimination. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD), USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Dates to Remember	
Aug 27	Last day to enroll in CRP
Sept 6	Labor Day - office closed
Sept 15	County Committee Meeting
Sept 23	Final date for asparagus producers to apply for TAA for Farmers
Sept 30	Last day to apply for SURE
Sept 30	Deadline to buy NAP coverage for all fall seeded crops and perennials (hay)
Oct 11	Office closed – Columbus Day
Oct 20	County Committee Meeting
Nov 11	Office closed – Veterans' Day
Nov 17	County Committee Meeting
Nov 25	Thanksgiving holiday –office closed
Dec 6	Last day to return voted ballots
Dec 24	Christmas Holiday – Office closed
Dec 31	New Year's Holiday – Office closed
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information ( Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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.