

March, 2013



**St. Joseph/Kalamazoo
County FSA Office**

693 E Main Street
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Office Hours 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

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Mack Francoeur Jr

Program Technicians:

Grant Drallette
Michelle Fambro
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County Committee:

Kathleen Buckham
Brian Decker
Ben Fritz
Stephen Kirklin
Sheryl Miller
Sandra Russell
Edward Schlabach
Belden Smith

DCP/ACRE Sign-up Continues

DCP and ACRE signups for the 2013 crops are on-going. The DCP sign-up period will end on August 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact the FSA county office for more information. Please call 269-467-6336 x 2 for your appointment.

**Public Comment Period for New FSA Election
Boundaries**

FSA County Committee elections are held each year in different local administrative areas (LAAs.) The LAAs in Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties must be redistributed, due to the combination of these offices last year.

The County Committees are proposing the following new LAA boundaries:

LAA 1: Constantine, Fabius, Florence, Flowerfield, Mottville, White Pigeon Townships

LAA 2: Leonidas, Lockport, Mendon, Nottawa, Park Townships

LAA 3: Burr Oak, Colon, Fawn River, Sherman, Sturgis Townships

LAA 4: Alamo, Charleston, Comstock, Cooper, Kalamazoo, Oshtemo, Portage, Richland, Ross, Texas Townships

LAA 5: Brady, Climax, Pavilion, Prairie Ronde, Schoolcraft, Wakeshma Townships

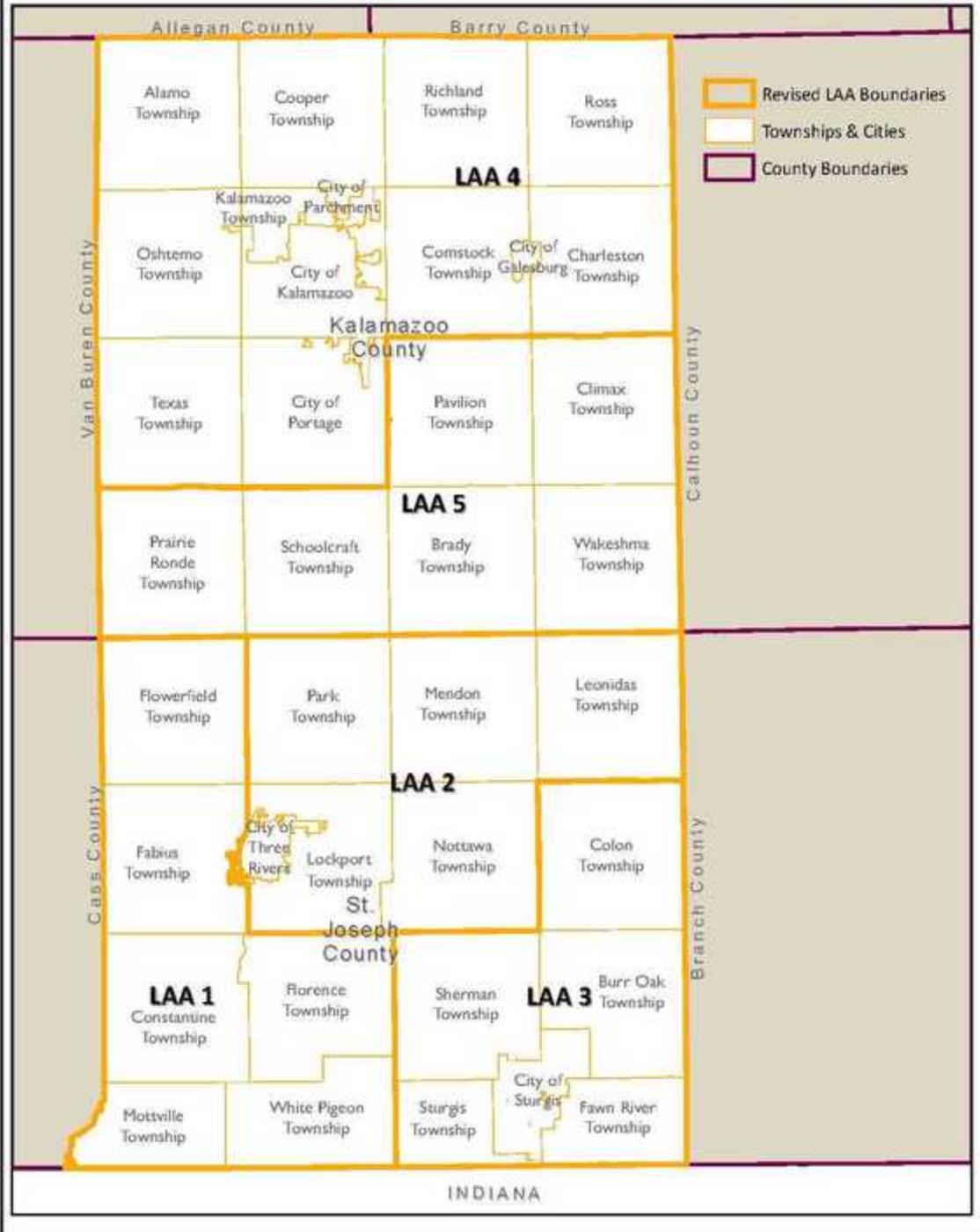
Eligible voters may submit public comments on the proposed changes through March 31, 2013.



Centreville FSA Service Center



Kalamazoo & St. Joseph Counties: Local Administrative Area Boundaries



Program Outreach

FSA is continually striving to seek out persons from minority, female and other under-represented groups to ensure they are informed of the agricultural services and programs that our office administers.

Any person of legal age who has an interest in a farm as an owner or operator is eligible to participate in FSA programs and the FSA County Committee election. If you or someone you know may be eligible for our programs or would like to be included in our mailings, please contact our office for more information.

45th CRP General Sign-Up

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years).

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on September 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, contact our office at 269-467-6336 x 2 or check out these programs online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process Deadline

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reminds Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades that the filing period will close March 25, 2013.

USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and/or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, 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 sponsored by FSA

§ Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Need Short-Term Operating Money?

Time is running out to request a 2012 commodity loan on grain stored either on the farm in an eligible storage structure or in an approved warehouse.

The deadlines are:

- March 31, 2013 for wheat, oats and barley.
- May 31, 2013 for corn and soybeans.

Contact your local FSA for additional information.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).