

March, 2014



## St. Joseph/Kalamazoo County FSA Updates

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- Farm Program Update
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### St. Joseph/Kalamazoo County FSA Office

693 E Main Street  
Centreville, MI 49032  
Phone: 269-467-6336 x 2  
Fax: 855-647-0822

**County Executive Director:**  
Sharon Hoch

**Program Technicians:**  
Grant Drallette  
Michelle Fambro  
Carol Fetterolf  
Dana Sherman

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mack Francoeur Jr  
Phone: 269-781-4263 x 2

**County Committee Members & Advisor:**  
Brian Decker  
Ben Fritz  
Stephen Kirklin  
Sheryl Miller  
Sandra Russell  
Edward Schlabach

Tentative date for Next County Committee Meeting: April 9th

### Farm Program Update

*FSA Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs*

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill) and for an FSA program overview, please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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### Interest Rates for March 2014

- 90-Day Treasury Bill: .125%
- Farm Operating Loans - Direct: 2.250%
- Farm Ownership Loans - Direct: 4.25%
- Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher: 1.50%
- Emergency Loans: 3.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years): 2.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years): 2.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years): 2.875%
- Marketing Assistance Loans: 1.125%

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## Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season; essential tools; irrigation; and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

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## Marketing Assistance Loans

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low-interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month marketing assistance loan (MAL) provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in a warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity, and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

### Loan Rates:

#### Kalamazoo County –

- **corn** – \$1.85/bu; **soybeans** – \$4.92/bu; **soft red winter wheat** - \$2.61/bu; **soft white wheat** - \$2.51/bu

#### St. Joseph County –

- **corn** – \$1.87/bu; **soybeans** - \$5.01/bu; **hard red winter wheat** – 3.14/bu; **soft red winter wheat** - \$2.60/bu; **soft white wheat** - \$2.54/bu

### Loan Application Deadlines:

- **corn** – May 31st;
- **soybeans** – May 31st;
- **wheat** – March 31st

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## AskFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at [askfsa.custhelp.com](http://askfsa.custhelp.com) .

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

Through AskFSA you can:

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

AskFSA is FSA's self-service assistance anytime, anywhere!

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## FSA Signature Policy

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

- 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
- A power of attorney form is available that allows producers to designate another person to sign papers **for FSA purposes only**.

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## Report Changes Now

This is a good time to notify our office, if you have any changes to your personal information or farming operation. These changes may include:

- Adding or dropping land
- Building a house, barn, or other structure on cropland
- Change in address, phone number, or email
- Change in bank or bank account
- Change in operating status – individual, trust, LLC, corporation, partnership, etc.

Update your records now and save time later!

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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).