

December 2013



Sanilac County FSA Updates

- NEW COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION BALLOTS TO BE MAILED
- FSA ADVISES PRODUCERS TO ANTICIPATE PAYMENT REDUCTIONS DUE TO MANDATED SEQUESTER
- 2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES
- EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE
- MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS AVAILABLE
- UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION

Sanilac County FSA Office

50 E. Miller Rd.
Sandusky, MI 48471
Phone: 810-648-2998
Fax: 855-663-1376

County Executive Director:
Rosemarie Gallagher

Farm Loan Specialist:
Steve Craig

Farm Loan Manager:
Dave Hemker

Program Technicians:
Amy Brown
Kim Deming
Jamie Maier
Brenda Nichol
Sherri Sadro

Farm Loan Program Technician:
Felicia Schulte

Next County Committee Meeting:
January 22, 2014 @ 9:00am

NEW COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION BALLOTS TO BE MAILED

Landowners and operators in Local Administrative Area 3 (Flynn, Elk, Buel, Lexington, Maple Valley, Speaker, Fremont and Worth Townships) will be receiving new County Committee Election ballots. The original ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County Committee elections must use a secret ballot, so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot was destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot, and on the outside of the return envelope. **The corrected ballot must be returned to the Sanilac County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014**

County Committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment.

More information on County Committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheets and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

FSA ADVISES PRODUCERS TO ANTICIPATE PAYMENT REDUCTIONS DUE TO MANDATED SEQUESTER

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing sequestration for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Sugar Loans;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;
- Storage, handling; and Economic Adjustment Assistance for upland cotton

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit your county USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/.

2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013, or December 15, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include wheat and native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Sanilac County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE

Effective September 11, 2013, twelve Michigan counties were designated as natural disaster areas where eligible family farmers may qualify for Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency (EM) loans due to losses caused by frost/freezes that occurred from April 1, 2013 through June 19, 2013. These counties include Antrim, Chippewa, Grand Traverse, Huron, Ionia, Leelanau, Livingston, Luce, Mackinac, Manistee, Monroe, and Van Buren.

In addition to the primary disaster counties named above, thirty-two other Michigan counties are named as contiguous counties, where farm operators in primary and contiguous counties are eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from FSA, pursuant to Section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. Sanilac County is one of those 32 contiguous counties that are eligible to be considered for emergency loans. Applications will be received through May 12, 2014.

Also effective November 13, 2013, four Michigan counties were designated as natural disaster areas where eligible family farmers may qualify for FSA emergency loans due to losses caused by hail that occurred from June 10, 2013 through August 2, 2013. These counties include Huron, Jackson, Saginaw and Washtenaw. Sixteen other counties were named as contiguous counties including Sanilac. Applications for losses caused by hail damage during these dates will be received through July 14, 2014.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS AVAILABLE

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in the 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.

UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

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).