March 2014

- USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs
- Livestock Producers Affected by Severe Weather Urged to Keep Good Records
- Farm Record Updates
- Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance
- Failed Acreage Provisions
- Prevented Planting Acreage
- Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

Shiawassee County FSA Updates

Shiawassee County FSA Office

1900 Morrice Rd.
Owosso, MI 48867
Phone: 989-723-8263
Fax: 855-662-9278

County Executive Director:
Jayne Van Ness

Farm Loan Officer:
Teresa Stewart

Program Technicians:
Louri Miller
Bernadette Schneider
Amanda Conklin

Farm Loan Program Technician:
Michelle Bailey

County Committee Members:
George Zmitko, Chair
Ernest Richardson Vice Chair
Dale Hackney, Member
Julia Birchmeier, Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting: April 10th, 2014 at 8:30 am

USDA's Farm Service Agency (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 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

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at 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

Livestock Producers Affected by Severe Weather Urged to Keep Good Records

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) again appeals to livestock producers affected by natural disasters such as the drought in the West and the unexpected winter storm in the upper Midwest to keep thorough records. This includes livestock and feed losses, and any additional expenses that are a result of losses to purchased forage or feed stuff.

In addition to western drought and the early-winter snowstorms, there are a variety of disasters from floods to storms to unexpected freezes. Each event causes economic consequences for farmers and ranchers throughout the United States. FSA recommends that owners and producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures;
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records;
- Pictures of on-farm storage facilities that were destroyed by wind or flood waters; and
- Evidence of damaged farm land.

Visit www.fsa.usda.gov or an FSA county office to learn more about FSA programs and loans. For information about USDA's Farm Bill implementation plan, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill

Farm Record Updates

Producers who have bought or sold land, added or dropped rented land and/or changed field boundaries within their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. Proof of ownership for purchased property is required to maintain accurate records. Failure to update required changes may lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties.

While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions is required. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. This would include projects initiated by the drain commission or parties other than the landowner or operator. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/

Failed Acreage Provisions

The snow is finally melting and spring is here (even though it doesn't feel like it), and producers fall seeded wheat and/or perennial forage crops can now be seen. As warmer weather conditions continue some areas/fields may be considered "failed" due to the extreme weather we have seen throughout the winter months.

Failed acreage is acreage that was timely planted with the intent to harvest, but because of disaster related conditions, the crop failed before it could be brought to harvest.

Producers who are requesting failed acreage credit shall prove to the County Committee's satisfaction that:

- The crop was planted with the intent to harvest using farming practices consistent for the crop and area
- The acreage failed because of disaster-related conditions

To be approved as failed acreage, the acreage must have been reported as failed acreage before the disposition of the crop; and the acreage must have been planted under normal conditions but failed as the result of a natural disaster and not a management decision.

Verification of failed acreage must be made by 1 of the following methods:

- Crop insurance data if the data supports for FSA-578, report of acreage
- County Committee (COC) knowledge
- Field visit

NOTE: If the COC has knowledge that an area is affected by a natural disaster, COC can approve the acreage without performing a field visit.

Failed acreage information must be filed on form CCC-576 and **cannot** be withdrawn or revised**.**

Prevented Planting Acreage

Prevented planting is the inability to plant the intended crop acreage with proper equipment by the final planting date for the crop type because of a natural disaster.

Ineligible Acreage for Prevented Planting includes but is not limited to, acreage:

- Not planted because of a management decision
- Affected by chemical and herbicide residue
- Where the producer was unable to find a market for the crop
- Affected by wildlife damage

To be considered timely filed, producers who request prevented planting acreage credit must report the acreage on form FSA-578 and complete form CCC-576, Part B within 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

After form CCC-576 is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn or revised

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade permanent farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan is $500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. March rates are:

- 7-Year Loan Term: 2.1250
- 10-Year Loan Term: 2.7500
- 12-Year Loan Term: 2.8750

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding $50,000.

To enhance repayment ability, multi-peril crop insurance or NAP is required for each year of the loan term. Fruit and vegetable producers, who produce a minimum of 3 different fruits and/or vegetables, may qualify for a waiver of this requirement if determined unfeasible by the State FSA Committee.

A series of improvements to the program have been developed to better tailor loans to finance on-farm storage and handling for small and mid-sized farms. The changes also for the first time allow FSFL's to cover the structure and equipment required to get fruits and vegetables washed, treated and packed along with cold storage.

The area of a structure required to house eligible handling equipment is eligible, in addition to the cold storage space. The handling equipment needs for fruit and vegetable producers are unique, based on the farming operation. Crops must go through certain processes before they can be placed in cold storage for quality to be maintained. Because of this the following equipment is also eligible for loan as long as it is permanently affixed.

- boxers and baggers
- washers, waxers and polishers
- bulk bin tippers
- case palletizers
- cold dip tanks
- fruit/vegetable conveyors
- food safety-related equipment (for example, sanitizers or pre-washing filter tanks)
- hydrocoolers
- ice machines
- quality graders
- sealants, sizers, sorting bins/tables

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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).