



March 2008

Atchison County Newsletter

Atchison County USDA Service Center

Atchison County FSA
302 E. Hwy 136
Rock Port, MO 64482
(660) 744-5328 (Phone)
(660) 744-5536 (Fax)

Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
Duane Klute, Chairperson
Craig Heits, Vice Chair
Julie Joesting, Member

Staff
County Executive Director
Corey Leshner

Farm Loan Manager
Bob Dreyer

Farm Loan Officer
Roger Uptergrove

Program Technicians
Nancy Daugherty
Pam Husing
Patricia Lane
Marilyn Thurnau
Karen Vette

Field Assistant
Chuck Linthicum

Ed Schafer Sworn in as Secretary of Agriculture

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Special Accommodations
Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the County Executive Director of their local Farm Service Agency office.

Since the last newsletter, not a lot has changed, except fortunately the weather has gotten a little warmer and the ground is not as white. I last reported that the Farm Bill had not passed and it has not passed to date. As soon as program information is known, future newsletters and news releases will announce the specific details. I encourage you to read this newsletter as there is information available on various disaster programs available for the 2005, 2006 and 2007 crop years. In addition, FSA is required to annually notify producers of many program requirements and policies. This newsletter contains many of those notifications. As always, please contact the office if you have any questions.

Please be safe as you begin your spring field work.

Corey Leshner

Emergency Conservation Program

It has been announced that producers who have made an application for cost-share assistance through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) due to the heavy rains and flooding must have the work completed by May 1, 2008 to be eligible for cost-share assistance. Due to the weather, FSA has been behind in making the required field visits. Please be patient as we work to complete this task.

Also, FSA has requested additional funding for ECP and applications that have not been approved to date cannot be approved until funding is received. Work can be completed without an approval, but the applicant must understand that cost-share payments will not be made until funding is received and there is always a chance that funding will not be received.

If you know you will not have the work completed by May 1, 2008, you are encouraged to contact the office and withdraw your application.

Disaster Programs

The office is currently conducting sign-up for the Crop Disaster Program and Livestock Compensation Program. Please read the article on page 2 for complete details.

Reporting Farm Changes

It is the producer's responsibility to notify FSA of any changes in their farming operation or entity status throughout the year. Changes that may affect a determination include, but are not limited to, a change in contract shares which may reflect change of land lease from cash rent to share rent; addition or deletion of a farm; change in the structure of the farming operation, such as individual to corporation or trust; change in contributions or inputs such as personal labor, or change in farming interests.

Timely notification of these changes will allow the office to update records prior to a program sign-up.

Livestock Compensation Program

The **Livestock Compensation Program (LCP)** sign-up is currently underway. This program compensates producers for a portion of their grazing losses during the 2006 grazing period in Atchison County.

Eligible ranchers and other livestock producers can apply to receive LCP compensation for feed losses which occurred between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006, due to a natural disaster. The natural disaster that occurred in Atchison County during the eligible time period was drought.

The program is similar to livestock programs in the past, as it looks at livestock numbers and grazing losses, calculates a dollar value for both, and pays the lesser of the two. Knowing the numbers of livestock owned or cash leased as of January 1, 2006 will begin the process. Several species of livestock are eligible for the program, however, the main category of livestock in Atchison County will be beef cattle. They will be divided into 2 groups; adult cattle, which are cows which have had at least 1 calf, bred heifers, and bulls 2 years of age or older, and non-adult cattle, which are cattle that weigh at least 500 pounds on January 1 of the designated year but do not meet the requirements for adult cattle. For calves or non-adult cattle to be eligible for payment, a producer must have owned them January 1 of 2006, they must have weighed at least 500 pounds on January 1 and the producer would have had to have maintained ownership through May 1, the beginning of the grazing period, of the applicable year. For example, calves sold in February will not be eligible because they did not graze your pastures after May 1.

The program will pay the lesser of: the value of the calculated grazing or feed loss, or a flat rate for the livestock. Producers will need to certify a grazing loss percentage for the year and provide pasture information for the application. Maximum payment rates are adult beef cattle \$10.66 per head; non-adult beef \$8.00 per head; all sheep and goats, \$2.67 per head; and equine, \$7.89 per head. Eligibility of equine and other livestock depends on its use. Sales of these types of livestock must be a part of the farming operation and be shown as farm income.

Crop Disaster Program (CDP)

CDP signup is currently underway. Producers who experienced quantity losses in excess of 35% to crops in 2005, 2006 and 2007 are eligible. Previously, only crops planted through Feb. 28, 2007 were eligible. This date has been extended to Dec. 31, 2007. Eligible producers with losses in multiple years will receive the payment for the year with the highest benefit. Qualified producers with land administered in more than one county may receive payment in both counties. Applications for loss benefits may be made on multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year. A payment limitation of \$80,000 per person applies. Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

The FSA office has received a download from the Risk Management Agency (RMA) which shows who had insurance and who received indemnity payments from insurance. In these situations, the FSA office can easily run an application to determine eligibility. There are various examples of when a producer may not have received an indemnity payment from insurance, but could be eligible for payment through CDP. One example would be based on the level of insurance a producer carries. If a producer had insurance at a 50% level, he may not have had enough of a loss to qualify with crop insurance, but there may have been a loss greater than 35% which would qualify under CDP. If unsure of eligibility, the following equation is used per RMA unit: $\text{Producer Share} \times \text{yield} \times 65\% - \text{actual production}$. If the result is a positive number, the loss would be eligible through CDP. Also, producers get the benefit of using the higher of the established RMA yield for the unit or the county average yield which is 135 bu/ac for corn and 42 bu/ac for soybeans in Atchison County.

Contact the office with specific questions.

Ed Schafer Sworn in as Secretary of Agriculture

Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 28, 2008.

Secretary Schafer brings a record as an innovative two-term governor of North Dakota to USDA along with extensive private sector experience as both an entrepreneur and a business executive. Schafer served as North Dakota's governor from 1992 to 2000 and made diversifying and expanding North Dakota's economy, reducing the cost of government and advancing agriculture his top priorities in office.

He worked to normalize trading relations with China and develop that nation as an export market for North Dakota farm products. He also led efforts to upgrade North Dakota's communications infrastructure and make high-speed voice and data networks available to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses.

Born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, Schafer graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and earned an MBA from the University of Denver in 1970.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transactions to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these requirements.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal law of planting, producing, cultivating, harvesting, growing, or storing a controlled substance will be ineligible to participate and receive payments under USDA programs. Marijuana, opium poppies, and other drug producing plants are controlled substances.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Do you need more storage capability for your farming operation? Check with your local FSA office to discuss the possibility of a Farm Storage Facility Loan. Low cost loans for storage facilities continue to be available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, grain sorghum, corn and soybeans.

The seven-year FSFL's are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures.

All FSFL's are secured with a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85% of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. A \$45.00 application fee is assessed and other fees are incurred depending on the type of loan being processed.

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Dates To Remember

March 31	Final availability date for 2007 wheat and oats loans and LDP's
May 1	Last day to have work completed for the ECP
May 26	Memorial Day – USDA Service Center Closed
May 31	Final availability date for 2007 corn and soybean loans and LDP's

Direct and Guaranteed Loans Available

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are available now.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Loan funds are available now — apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner. Most of our loan programs have special funding available for minority, female and beginning farmers.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the FSA loan officials to arrange an appointment to meet with you and discuss your options.

Selected Interest Rates for March 2008

90-Day Treasury Bill	3.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.750%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.875%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans Beginning Farmer Down Payment	4.000%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	3.125%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.250%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	3.125%

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs 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, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.