



Greene County News

May 2009

Greene County USDA Service Center



Greene County FSA

688 S State HWY B
Suite 300
Springfield, MO 65802
PH 417-831-5246
Fax 417-831-4022
www.fsa.usda.gov/mo

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

David Trogon - Chm
Judy Spencer - VChm
Larry White - Mem

County Committee
meets the first
Wednesday of each
month at 10:00 a.m.
in the county office.

Staff

Barbara Ingerson - PT
Brenda Maggard - PT
Sharon Pettibon - FLT
Jim Kyle - DD
Ron Keith - AFLPS
Mark Aycock - FLS
Wyman Miller -CED



DCP & ACRE Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price. The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. The ACRE program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price. Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to:

- forego counter-cyclical payments;
- accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments; and
- accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain

rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas. The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program. To elect ACRE for a farm, producers must complete Form CCC-509 ACRE, which irrevocably elects ACRE for the farm through crop year 2012. Form CCC-509, the contract to participate in ACRE, must then be completed each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits.

2009 FSA County Committee Elections

June 15 is the beginning of the nomination period for the FSA County Committee (COC) election. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign a nomination form FSA-669A. This form is available at USDA Service Centers or online at fsa.usda.gov. For 2009, nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on **August 3, 2009**. Committees are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on COC's help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their county. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers. Local Administrative Area 1, which is comprised of 1st & 2nd Franklin, 1st & 2nd Robberson, 1st & 2nd Jackson townships, is up for election this year. Judy Spencer is currently representing this area.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

ELAP provides emergency relief to producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish to aid in the reduction of losses because of disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary, during the calendar year, that are not covered by the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Livestock Indemnity

Program (LIP), and Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

Livestock, honey bee, and farm-raised fish producers who have incurred 2008 and/or 2009 calendar year losses not covered by SURE, LIP, and LFP are advised to begin compiling their loss documentation, if interested in ELAP..

Livestock, honey bee, or farm-raised fish producers **must provide FSA with verifiable documentation** for all losses for which compensation is wanted.

All types of losses for which livestock, honey bee, and farm-raised fish producers may be compensated for under ELAP will not be known until the regulations for ELAP are published in the Federal Register.

Honey bee producers who incur physical losses of honey bees and honey bee hives because of colony collapse disorder must provide documentation and/or a certification that the loss of honey bees was because of colony collapse disorder from one or more of the following:

- registered entomologist
- Cooperative Extension specialist
- Land Grant University.

Farm-raised fish producers who incur physical losses of farm-raised fish because of adverse weather or other conditions must provide documentation of beginning inventory on the beginning date of the adverse weather event and the ending inventory.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office. The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

2009 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

The 2008 Farm Bill extended the enrollment authority for an additional 1.2 Million acres of GRP. This is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland. Applications will be accepted May 18th through June 5th, 2009. 10, 15 and 20 year rental agreements and permanent easements will be available. The minimum acreage for GRP enrollment is 40 contiguous acres. Under this program participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The 2008 Farm Bill includes the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) which provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have incurred livestock death losses due to a natural disaster, on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011. Losses because of adverse weather, as determined by the Secretary during the calendar year, including blizzards, disease, extreme cold, extreme heat, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, are eligible for LIP. FSA advises farmers and ranchers who lose livestock due to adverse weather to compile and document their livestock death losses. Producers are advised that **verifiable** death loss documentation will not be accepted by County Offices until their LIP applications are filed.

Adequate documentation must prove the death of eligible livestock occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. If adequate verifiable proof of death records documentation is **not** available, a livestock producer may provide reliable records, along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory, as proof of death. Certifications of livestock deaths by third parties may be accepted FSA **only** if verifiable proof of death records or reliable proof of death records along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory records are **not** available. Additional information about LIP is available at FSA County Offices or by going on line at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/notices>

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by July 31 for all spring planted crops including hay and pasture.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Low Dairy Prices Trigger Payments

Because of low dairy prices across the country, dairy producers participating in USDA's Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program are receiving MILC payments. Payments are made on a monthly basis when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight as adjusted for feed costs. USDA determines the per hundredweight payment rate for the applicable month by subtracting the Boston Class I price for that month from the \$16.94 MILC payment trigger price, established in the 2008 Farm Bill, as adjusted for feed costs, and multiplying the difference by 45 percent. The monthly Boston price along with final MILC payment rates are posted online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA>. The MILC payment rate for February was \$1.5132 per cwt and \$2.00561 for March.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA. For detail information loan eligibility or the different available loan programs, just contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer



Selected Interest Rates for March 2009	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.00%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.50%
Farm Ownership Loans — Beginning Farmer Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.25%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.50%

Banking Changes?

If you have changed banks and not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

Zoning for Conservation

By: Blake Stephens, Fisheries Management Biologist, Missouri Dept of Conservation

Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) management biologists have a wide variety of conservation tools at their disposal to help landowners and land managers meet their individual conservation objectives. One of these conservation tools that is often misunderstood is a conservation easement.

A conservation easement (CE) is a land-use agreement in which the landowner voluntarily limits certain development activities in order to conserve the distinctive natural resources of their property. It is a way to ensure the land will forever be managed for conservation purposes while maintaining private ownership, management, and access. It's like zoning a portion of the land for conservation.

Most CE's are perpetual in nature, meaning they are tied to the property deed and remain in place regardless of how many times the land is bought or sold. Each CE is tailor-made to meet the needs of the individual landowner. It can be set up on all or part of their land, and the landowner helps decide any specific restrictions.

Conservation easements are either donated or sold to a local nonprofit organization known as a land trust that is responsible for holding and enforcing the conservation easement. The largest such organization in Southwest Missouri is Ozark Regional Land Trust (ORLT). Donated easements can provide tax savings on income and estate (property) taxes, while selling a conservation easement provides immediate compensation for the easement.

If you are interested in finding out more about conservation easements, including details about grant funding available to Southwest Missouri landowners interested in selling conservation easements, give me a call at the Neosho MDC office (417)451-4158 or e-mail Blake.Stephens@mdc.mo.gov. You can also check out Ozark Regional Land Trust's website at www.ORLT.org for more detailed information on how conservation easements work and the potential tax benefits associated with them.

10 ACRE ELIGIBILITY RULE CHANGED

The 2008 Farm Bill prohibited DCP base farms with 10 acres or less to participate until recently. The revision to this rule states that if your farm is owned 50 percent by a Socially Disadvantage (SDA) individual, which includes Women, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asian-Americans, Black, African-American or Hispanic-American or a limited resource producer you can now participate in the DCP signup. An example of this may be a farm owned jointly by husband and wife. Don't forget the August 14 deadline to sign the DCP contract.

For more information on the SDA or Limited Resource Rules please call or visit your local USDA Service Center. You can also obtain information on-line at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

SOYBEAN REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM

The USDA is offering soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research order. The Secretary of Agriculture is required to conduct a "Request for Referendum" (RfR) every 5 years after the initial referendum. The last RfR was in 2004 and soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the soybean check-off program are invited to participate. The RfR began in the FSA Office on May 4th and will continue through May 29th. Producers must provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on them during the period January 1, 2007 thru December 31, 2008.

Selected Interest Rates for May 2009

90-Day Treasury Bill	0.25%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.25%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.625%

Dates to Remember

May 13	Farm Storage Facility Loan comment period ends (http://public.geo-marine.com)
May 18	2008 NAP & Crop Insurance Buy-in Deadline
May 25	Office closed – Memorial Day
July 31	Final Crop Reporting Date
August 14	ACRE sign-up deadline
August 14	DCP sign-up deadline
Continues	Continuous Conservation Re- serve program

Visit our website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/mo