

January/February 2008



County FSA News

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Programs Extended to March 15, 2008

On Dec. 26, 2007, President George W. Bush signed the *Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008* (2008 Act). The 2008 Act, extends FSA's authority to administer the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and marketing loan benefits for wool and mohair through March 15, 2008. Under the 2002 Farm Bill, USDA's authority to administer these programs expired on Dec. 31, 2007.

Additionally, the 2008 Act provides \$3.3 billion in direct and guaranteed loan funds for FSA's Farm Loan Programs.

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.

Disaster Eligibility Date Extended

Eligible farmers and producers who suffered livestock, livestock feed and crop losses that occurred before Dec. 31, 2007, can now apply to receive disaster payments.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications and making payments for quantity losses under Crop Disaster Program (CDP) that occurred before Dec. 31, 2007. FSA is currently issuing Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) payments for losses that occurred up to Feb. 28, 2007, and will soon issue payments for losses incurred during the remainder of 2007. **FSA will conduct sign-up and begin making payments for quality losses under CDP this spring.** More information about CDP, LCP and LIP is available online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

The Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment (DDAP-III) Program, which provides benefits to eligible dairy producers for production losses suffered as a result of natural disasters since Jan. 1, 2005, has also been extended by the 2008 Act to cover, in addition, any 2007 disaster occurring before Dec. 31, 2007.

As a result, DDAP-III sign-up, which began Dec. 3, 2007, was temporarily suspended until automation, policy, procedure and other administrative items could be updated accordingly. **DDAP-III program sign-up will resume after the final regulations are published.**

County Committee Meetings

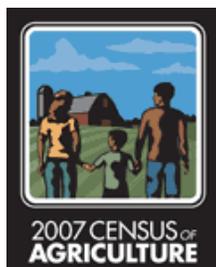
The County Farm Service Agency committee meets once a month. The committee has an established time and day each month for its regular meeting time and the County FSA Office as its meeting place.

The FSA Office will post a notice on the county office bulletin board if the committee must reschedule the time or place of its next meeting.

For a list of Committee Members, the scheduled meeting time and date, and the area they represent contact your local County FSA Office.

Kansas City Mails 1099-G

During the last week of January, producers who have received payments from FSA should have also received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to you in calendar year 2007. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.



If you received a CCC-1099-G, we recommend that you check the amounts shown with those in your records to see that the amounts are correct. **Refunds are no longer reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries web-based database.**

Program participants with eAuthentication user ID's and passwords can access their refund information at the FSA's homepage, and click on "Online Services". Once the page opens, click on "Financial Inquiries for FSA Producers" which is located under the "Related Topics" section. Next, producers will login with their USER ID and password and then select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your local FSA office for assistance locating the correct payment data. If you choose to visit the office, bring your CCC-1099-G with you.

NAP Coverage Deadline

March 15th is the last day for producers to apply for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage using Form CCC-471, Application for Coverage, and pay the service fee at the county office. The application and service fee must be filed **by March 15th**, the deadline date for 2008 spring planted crops which include: forage sorghum, oats, potatoes, soybeans, sunflowers and all spring planted specialty crops grown for food.

The service fee is \$100 per crop per county or \$300 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$900 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

Ag Census Forms Due Feb 4th

The Census of Agriculture, taken every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and many other areas.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) began distribution of the 2007 Census of Agriculture last month and the completed forms are due back **by February 4, 2008**. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure website at: <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2007 crop year honey are available **until March 31, 2008**. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate; so LDP's are not available right now.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested, and extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping the honey. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

The honey must be produced in the United States by an eligible producer, from an approved floral source, and stored in approved containers. The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed. Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

Conservation Compliance

All participants in USDA programs are required to have a conservation system in place on all the highly erodible land (HEL) that they operate. Several areas where problems can arise with complying with a conservation system are; renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops such as soybeans, and changing or removing existing conservation practices.

It is very important that you contact the FSA office before doing any of the above. Also, it is very important that you contact our office before modifying - tiling, draining, dredging, filling, or leveling - any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.

Minority Farm Register

The USDA Minority Farm Register is a tool to promote equal access to USDA farm programs and services for minority farmland owners, farmers, tenants, and other individuals with an agricultural interest. Participants may receive information or be personally contacted through USDA outreach efforts. USDA programs include direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, marketing loans, as well as conservation, housing & rural business, and risk management.

Participation in the Register is voluntary. All minority persons involved in farming are encouraged to participate. The information you provide may be shared through the USDA Office of Outreach with other USDA-approved outreach partners such as community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other government agencies.

If you are involved with farming and wish to be included in the Minority Farm Register, you are invited to visit the local county office staff and request the register form or download the form from the FSA Website at:

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/ad2035_040729v01.pdf.

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
February 2008**

90-Day Treasury Bill	3.000%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.000%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans Beginning Farmer Down Payment	4.000%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	3.500%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	4.125%

Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low interest rate loans for storage facilities are still available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, soybeans and corn.

The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans 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 re-manufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures.

All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. For details, contact the county office staff.

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 18	President's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Mar. 15	2002 Farm Bill Extension deadline for 2008 LDP's on wool, mohair and unshorn pelts.
Mar. 15	2002 Farm Bill Extension deadline for Contract Approval for all CRP, including CREP program practices.
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2008 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
Mar. 31	Final Availability for 2007 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDP's.
Continuous	Farm Storage Facility Loan program.

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

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