

February 2013



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Belmont/Monroe County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office **NAP Coverage Deadline**

1119 E Main St, Ste 1
Barnesville, OH 43713

Phone: 740-425-2300 or
800-818-7645 from 740
area code, option 2

Fax: 740-425-2664

County Executive Director:
Christy S. Collins

Program Technicians:
Tina Pittman
Lisa Butler

Farm Loan Managers:

Belmont:
Sam Raber at 330-339-5585

Monroe:
David Drake at 614-255-2453

County Committee:
Charles Schaefer, Chair
Dale Dietrich, Vice Chair
Stanley Borovich
Clayton Farnsworth
Stephen Wharton

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 FSA county office. The application and service fee must be filed **by March 15th**, the deadline date for 2013 spring planted crops which include: forage sorghum, oats, potatoes, soybeans, sunflowers and all spring planted specialty crops grown for food.

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 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.

For a fact sheet on the NAP program, [click here](#).

DCP and ACRE Sign-up

The Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program are being offered for the 2013 crop year under the 2008 Farm Bill Extension.

DCP and ACRE sign-up for 2013 crops began on **February 19, 2013**. The DCP sign-up period will end on August 2, 2013 and ACRE sign-up will end on June 3, 2013.

The only program change from 2012 to 2013 is that all eligible participants in

Louella Urbanek, Advisor

2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013 (and vice versa).

The ACRE program Fact Sheet [can be found here](#). The DCP Fact Sheet [can be found here](#). Contact the Belmont/Monroe county FSA office for more information, or to setup an appointment to enroll.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation 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 are reminded to comply with tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements specified in their conservation plan. Farmers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these activities can result in the loss of eligibility for certain USDA program benefits.

Producers Reminded that Emergency Loans are Available

Both Belmont and Monroe Counties had multiple Disaster Declarations in 2012 that could make producers eligible for Emergency Loans. On August 1, 2012, Presidential Major Disaster Designation M4071 was made for the severe storms and straight line winds June 29 – July 8, 2012. Emergency Loans are available through March 25, 2013.

On August 24, 2012, Administrator's Physical Loss Notification N1107 was announced due to high winds, hail, lightning and excessive heat events from June 29, 2012 – July 1, 2012. Emergency Loans are available through April 24, 2013.

Secretarial Designation S3384 was announced on 9/5/2012 due to drought and excessive heat that occurred from February 1, 2012 and continuing through date of approval. Emergency Loans are available through May 6, 2013.

This gives all qualified farm operators in the designated areas the opportunity to file an application for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

Individuals interested in applying for a Emergency Loans, should contact the one of the following to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official: Belmont County producers should contact Sam Raber at 330-339-5585 and Monroe County producers should contact David Drake at 614-255-2453.

For a fact sheet on Emergency Loans, [click here](#).

New Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

In addition to microloans, FSA offers several farm loan programs that provide funding to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies, or can be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.

Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact the one of the following to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official: Belmont County producers should contact Sam Raber at 330-339-5585 and Monroe County producers should contact David Drake at 614-255-2453.

The Microloan program Fact Sheet can be [found here](#).

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has targeted funding for members of Socially Disadvantaged Applicants. A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

For detailed information on loan eligibility or the different loan programs available, contact the one of the following to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official: Belmont County producers should contact Sam Raber at 330-339-5585 and Monroe County producers should contact David Drake at 614-255-2453. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

For a fact sheet on Loans for Socially Disadvantaged, [click here](#).

Paper Check Conversion

In February 2013, our office began converting producers' checks into Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT). Funds will be debited from the originating checking account, usually within 24 hours. Paper checks will be scanned, voided and stamped with the words "Electronically Processed" and then held by FSA for 14 days to ensure they are successfully processed. Checks will be shredded after this 14 day period.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers. To change account information, you must take form SF-3881 to your bank and have it completed by a bank official. [Click here for form.](#)

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

Faxed Signatures

Certain faxed signatures shall be accepted for all applicable program forms or other documents approved for faxed signatures, if all other signature requirements are met.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Power of Attorney

FSA has a required power of attorney form available for those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., that enables the participant to designate another person to conduct his or her business at the office. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or [click here](#).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).