

December 2013



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Belmont/Monroe County FSA Updates

Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office

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County Executive Director:
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Tina Pittman

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Belmont County:
Sam Raber
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Monroe County:
David Drake
Phone: 740-454-2824

**Next County Committee
Meeting: January 23, 2014 at
9:00 a.m.**

New County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot has been destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on Dec. 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Stanley Borovich is nominated in LAA 4, Belmont County, to serve as a committee member. Stephen Wharton is nominated in LAA 5, Belmont County.

Write-in candidates must reside in the appropriate LAA, be eligible to serve on the Committee and must indicate a willingness to serve on the Committee.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at the Belmont County FSA office.

2014 Acreage Reporting Dates

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a December 16, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include wheat and native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Belmont/Monroe County:

Dec. 16, 2013 --- Fall Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

Jan. 2, 2014 ----- Report honey and Maple sap.

Jan. 15, 2014 ---- Apples, Grapes.

May 31, 2014 --- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.

July 15, 2014 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/14-5/31/14), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops.

Aug. 15, 2014 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/14-7/20/14).

Sept. 30, 2014 --- Report Aquaculture.

Dec. 15, 2014 --- Fall Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the

acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the FSA office.

FSA Advises Producers to Anticipate Payment Reductions Due to Mandated Sequester

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing varying sequestration rates for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today's announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit your county USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Changes to IRS Forms 1099-G and 1099-Misc for Calendar Year 2013

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G were issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. Starting in 2012 the 1099-G reporting changed.

IRS Form 1099-G (Report of Payments to Producers) will only be issued to producers whose reportable payments total \$600 or more for the calendar year. Additionally, if the producer has at least \$600 in reportable payments received from multiple FSA offices, only one Form 1099-G will be issued. Producers subject to

voluntary withholding or backup (involuntary) withholding will receive the appropriate IRS form, even if combined payments are less than \$600.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

Any producer who receives less than \$600 in combined payments should consult a tax advisor to determine if these payments must be reported on their tax return.

FSA offers MicroLoans- Cultivating Big Dreams on a Smaller Scale

In January 2013 the Farm Service Agency (FSA) began offering the new MicroLoan program. From January 2013 thru September 2013 FSA funded 3400 microloans nationally. And as of September 30, 2013 there were an additional 500 microloan applications in process. Of the 3400 microloans two-thirds were made to beginning farmers and 648 of the loans were to female farmers.

The FSA microloan program was developed to better serve the unique financial operating needs of small family farms, beginning farmers, and socially disadvantaged farmers. The microloan also will be useful for the credit needs of specialty crop producers, produce farms selling at farmers markets, and operators of community supported agriculture (CSAs). The microloan program offers a simplified loan application form and loan process. The requirements for farm management experience have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations and beginning farmers. Microloan applicants will need to have some farm experience but this can be supplemented by an apprenticeship and by gaining farm management experience working with a mentor.

FSA microloans are limited to a maximum of \$35,000. The repayment terms for a microloan will vary with the use of the loan funds. Microloan funds used for annual operating expenses are scheduled to be repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Microloans for livestock and equipment can have a term up to 7 years. The interest rate for microloans is based on the FSA regular operating loan rate.

Microloan funds can be used for all approved FSA operating loan purposes such as initial startup expenses; annual operating expenses such as seed, fertilizer, rent; purchase of livestock and equipment; hoop houses to extend the growing season; and irrigation equipment.

Additional information on the FSA microloan program can be obtained at local FSA offices or through the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov. Belmont County farmers can contact Sam Raber at 330-339-5585. Monroe County farms can contact David Drake at 740-454-2824.

Dates to Remember

Dec. 16 ---- Deadline to report the 2014 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains.

Dec. 20 ---- Corrected County committee ballots mailed to voters.

Dec. 25 ---- Christmas Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Jan. 1 ----- New Year's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Jan. 15 ---- **Deadline extended** to report **the 2013 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains** without paying a late-file fee.

Jan. 17 ---- **Last day** to return corrected ballots in county committee election.

Jan. 20 ---- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Jan. 31 ---- **Deadline** on 2013 LDPs for wool and unshorn lamb pelts.

Feb. 17 ---- President's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Feb. 18 ---- Elected Committee Members and alternates take office

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