

April 2014



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## Belmont/Monroe County FSA Updates

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### Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office

1119 E Main St, Ste 1  
Barnesville, OH 43713-9102

**Phone: 740-425-2300**  
Toll Free from 740 area code:  
800-818-7645  
Fax: 855-832-5173

**County Executive Director:**  
Christy Collins

**Farm Loan Manager:**

**Belmont County:**  
Sam Raber  
Phone: 330-339-5585

**Monroe County:**

### USDA Announces the Extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract Program for 2014

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced the extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which protects dairy farmers against income loss through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers (MPP) is operational.

Contracts for eligible producers enrolled in MILC on or before Sept. 30, 2013, are automatically extended until the termination date of the MILC program. Dairy operations with approved MILC contracts will continue to receive monthly payments if a payment rate is in effect.

MILC compensates enrolled dairy producers when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt), after adjustment for the cost of dairy feed rations. MILC payments are calculated each month using the latest milk price and feed cost, just as in the 2008 Farm Bill. The payment rate for October 2013 through February 2014 marketings is zero. Payment rates during the months after February 2014 until the

David Drake  
Phone: 740-454-2824

termination of the MILC program will be determined as the appropriate data becomes available.

**Program Technicians:**  
Tina Pittman

Producers who want to select a different production start month must visit the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office between **April 14, 2014, and May 30, 2014.**

**Next County Committee Meeting: June 2 at 9:00 am**

FSA will provide producers with information on program requirements, updates and sign-ups as the information becomes available.

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

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## New FAX Number

Please note that the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office now has a new fax number. Our new FAX number is **855-832-5173**. Please use this new number for any correspondence sent to the Belmont/Monroe County FSA by FAX.

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## Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment.

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## FSA Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill) and for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## FSA Announces Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Signup began **April 15, 2014** at the Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program.

Ohio has been hit hard this past winter with record low temperatures and with spring finally here, orchard and

vineyard producers may begin to see the extent of damage.

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying fruit and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, fruit growers must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

If physical evidence of the lost trees, bushes, or vines no longer exists, the owner must provide documentation to determine the eligible trees, bushes, or vines existed and were lost on each stand because of the approved disaster condition.

Examples of documentation can include:

- Receipts for the original purchase of the eligible trees, bushes, or vines where TAP is requested,
- Documentation of labor and equipment used to plant or remove the eligible trees, bushes, or vines that were lost,
- Chemical, fertilizer, or other related receipts to substantiate the existence of the eligible trees, bushes, or vines.
- RMA (Risk Management Agency) appraisal worksheet may be used by the County FSA Committee to substantiate applicant's certification of trees lost.

For more information, producers are encouraged to review the [TAP fact sheet](#) or contact the Belmont/Monroe County FSA Office at 740-425-2300 (Ext. 2).

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## **New Farm Bill Provides Permanent Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs**

The 2014 Farm Bill, formally known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, makes the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) permanent programs and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011.

LFP provides compensation to eligible producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought and fire. LIP provides compensation to livestock producers who suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the Federal Government or protected by Federal law, including wolves and avian predators.

As USDA begins implementing the livestock disaster assistance programs, producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts

- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

Many producers still have questions. USDA is in the process of interpreting Farm Bill program regulations. Additional information will be provided once the enrollment period is announced. In the meantime, producers can review the [LIP and LFP Fact Sheets](#). Thanks for your patience as USDA works diligently to put Farm Bill programs into action to benefit the farmers and ranchers of rural America.

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## Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill) authorized up to \$20 million in funds each fiscal year for the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). The program provides emergency assistance to eligible producers for losses due to an eligible adverse weather or eligible loss condition, including blizzards, disease (including cattle tick fever), water shortages and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. The loss must have occurred on or after October 1, 2011. ELAP covers losses that are not covered under other programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill.

For more information, fact sheets are available by [clicking here](#).

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## Report Failed Crop Acreage Prior to Destruction

With spring planting quickly approaching, the Belmont/Monroe County Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages farmers to report failed crop acreage that will not be brought to harvest to their FSA office. Failed acreage must be reported to FSA before destroying and replanting to allow time for a field check.

It is very important that farmers report failed acreage that will not be brought to harvest to the FSA office prior to destruction. This simple act of insuring that failed acres are documented could be the determining factor in whether or not a farmer is eligible for future crop disaster program payments.

Form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. For crop losses covered by the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), producers must contact their local FSA office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers with crop insurance should also contact their local agent when losses occur and before destroying the crop.

Producers are encouraged to keep good production records on acreage with a low crop yield to document crop losses. To be eligible for crop disaster programs in the future, production records may help support crop loss claims.

Additional information in regard to failed crop acreage or crop losses covered by the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) can be obtained by contacting the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office at 740-425-2300 (Ext. 2).

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## New Farm Bill Offers Increased Loan Opportunities for Producers

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of loan term limits for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership down payments from \$225,000 to \$300,000.
- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guarantee amount on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the [FSA Farm Bill website](#) for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

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## County Farm Service Agency Nominations

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Belmont/Monroe Farm Service Agency is looking for individuals interested in serving on the County Committee. This year Local Administrative Area (LAA)-3 will be having an election. LAA-3 is comprised of the following townships in Monroe County: Seneca, Summit, Center, Wayne and Franklin. Any eligible person residing in one of these townships who is interested in running for County Committee, or would like to nominate an individual to run for County Committee, must complete a nomination form. The Nomination form for County FSA Committee Election (FSA-669A) is available at the Belmont/Monroe County FSA office and [online](#).

Members of socially disadvantaged groups (a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) are strongly encouraged to complete the Nomination Form for County FSA Committee Election (FSA-669A) and nominate themselves or another eligible candidate.

Committee members make decisions on applications for federal farm program and disaster payments. Committee members play a vital role by helping local farmers manage tough financial times and natural disasters. County committee members make many other important decisions that affect local farmers such as whether haying and grazing should be allowed on Conservation Reserve Program land.

For more information regarding the County Committee Elections, talk to Christy Collins, County Executive Director at 740-425-2300, option 2, or stop in the office located at 1119 E Main St., Ste 1 Barnesville, OH 43713, for details on the types of decisions county committee members make. Or visit the County Committee Elections website to learn more about the County Committee Election process and read over the fact sheets at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.

The nomination period runs until August 1, 2014. Nomination forms for the 2014 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by close of business on Aug. 1, 2014. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters November 3rd and must be returned by December 1, 2014. The elected Committee Member and Alternates will take office January 1, 2015.

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## Selected Interest Rates for April 2014

- 90 Day Treasury Bill, -- 0.125%
- Farm Operating Loans, Direct, -- 2.000%
- Farm Ownership Loans, Direct, -- 4.000%
- Limited Resource Loans, -- 5.000%
- Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment, -- 1.500%
- Emergency Loans, -- 3.000%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year, -- 2.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year, -- 2.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year, -- 2.875%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year, -- 3.125%
- Commodity Loans, 1996- Present, -- 1.125%

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## ASKFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at <http://askfsa.custhelp.com/>

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions. It is for ALL who wish to be enrolled in FSA programs.

**Through AskFSA you can:**

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time.

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## USDA Sets Date for Soybean Request for Referendum

USDA will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act).

Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate. To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from FSA county offices starting on May 5, 2014 through May 30, 2014. Forms are also available on the [AMS website](#). Producers who don't participate in FSA programs

can still request a referendum at the FSA county office where they own or rent land.

Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA county office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014. If returned by mail, it must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Notice of the Request for Referendum was published in the March 4, 2014, Federal Register. For more information, visit the [AMS website](#) or contact James Brow, Research and Promotions Branch; Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0251 - Room 2610-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; tel. (202) 720-0633.

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## Dates to Remember

**May 26** ----- Memorial Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**May 30** ----- **Last Day** to vote on Soybean Request for Referendum.

**June 2** ----- **Deadline to** apply for 2013 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

**July 4** ----- Independence Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**July 15** ----- Final date to submit 2013 production for ACRE participants

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Visit our website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/oh](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/oh)

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).