Crawford County News

January 2009

Crawford County USDA Service Center

Crawford County FSA
3115 SR 98
Bucyrus, Oh 44820
419-562-8936 (phone)
419-562-8815 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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

County Committee
Terry Corney
Donovan Scott
Allen Schimpf
Trudy Ruehle

County Committee meets Second Tuesday of the Month at 8:30

Staff
Sharon Stump
Heather Hiler
Gail Walter
Kate Brause
Crystal McCown
Randy Hiler
Ray Greenick
Jim Greve

DCP Sign-up Underway

Sign-up has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres. You can sign-up online or at local FSA Service Centers. Sign-up will continue **until June 1, 2009** and unlike years past, participants **may not enroll** in DCP after June 1 of the applicable contract year. There are **no late-filed provisions** for contract years 2009-2012.

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 eligle to participate in the DCP Program and can be accessed at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp and then click on the "Access eDCP Services" link, under the "I Want to Section". To access this online 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 and then click on the "Create an Account Page" link, and lastly followed by a visit to the local FSA Service Center for identity verification.

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 set below its target price.

Producers who are eligible for the DCP Program will also be eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. The enrollment period for the ACRE Program will begin in the spring. You may first enroll in the DCP Program, receive advance direct payments and then later modify your enrollment to include the ACRE program or you may wait and elect to enroll in DCP and ACRE at the same time in spring 2009.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Allen Schimpf! Allen was re-elected to represent farmers from Chatfield, Lykens, Texas, Cranberry and Auburn, on the county committee. Allen was elected to his second consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

Allen Schimpf — Elected to the county committee (COC),
Donald Reer — 1st alternate to COC,
Sandy Stockmaster — 2nd alternate to COC

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

LDP Deadline on Unshorn Wool, Mohair and Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have **until Feb. 2, 2009**, to apply for LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts produced during the 2008 crop year.

Eligible producers must have beneficial interest in the pelts, owned the lamb for at least 30 calendar days before the date of slaughter and sell the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter. Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in.

To qualify for payment, pelts must have been produced by an eligible producer from live unshorn lambs of domestic origin in the United States.

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.

MILC Sign-Up Underway

Sign-up for the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) is underway and will be conducted in two phases. The initial sign-up phase began on Dec. 22, 2008 and will end on Jan. 21, 2009. During the 30 calendar day initial sign-up phase, producers may submit CCC-580's and can make either of the following MILC production start month selections.

- The month CCC-580 is submitted and any month that precedes the month CCC-580 is submitted;
- Any month remaining in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, according to normal start month selection provisions; or
- FY 2010 through 2012, any month for each FY may also be selected during the initial sign-up phase according to normal production start month provisions.

The extended sign-up phase begins on Jan. 22, 2009 after the initial sign-up ends. The extended sign-up will continue throughout the duration of the MILC program, ending on September 30, 2012. Producers that submit CCC-580's during the extended sign-up can select as the MILC production start month for their dairy operation either:

- The month the CCC-580 is submitted or
- From the remaining months in FY in which CCC-580 is submitted for which the payment rate is not known and according to MILC production start month selection provisions.

The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorizes the MILC Program, which operates similarly to the counter-cyclical payment program for crops, and makes three key changes in program operation. Under the Farm Bill, the MILC payment rate and the per-operation poundage limit are modified, depending on when the milk is produced. In addition, a "feed cost adjuster," is introduced over the life of the 2008 Act, which adjusts the $16.94 per hundredweight (cwt.) benchmark price upward depending on the cost of feed rations. When available, MILC payments are based on a payment rate percentage that is multiplied by the difference between a now-flexible target ($16.94 per cwt. or higher) and the specific month's Boston Class I price of milk.

The 2008 Farm Bill made changes to the provisions for payment eligibility and Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). If the individual or entity has non-farm AGI greater than $500,000, the individual or entity is not eligible for MILC benefits. For more information on the MILC program, contact your local FSA office.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Not applying early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Loan Approval Official for more details and assistance in applying.

County Committee Minority Advisors

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for under-represented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. County committee members and their county executive directors, actively reach out to producer groups who are under-represented on county committees.

Eligibility requirements for COC Advisor nominee include:

- be actively participating in farming or ranching in the county or area;
- be willing and available to serve as an advisor, if appointed; and
- indicate in writing their willingness to serve.

Duties and Responsibilities of COC Advisors include:

- attending each COC meeting, including executive sessions;
- participating in all deliberations;
- increasing awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections, by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions;
- helping to develop interest and incentives in socially disadvantaged group members for considering FSA work as a career;
- actively soliciting candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process; and
- able to perform special duties at COC s request.

Note: Advisors do not have authority to sign documents.

Interested individuals should submit a written letter that outlines their abilities and qualifications, as well as their willingness to serve, postmarked by Jan. 28, 2009. The Crawford County Committee will review these submissions and recommend a minority advisor to the Ohio FSA State Committee. The Ohio FSA State Committee will appoint the minority advisor, whose term will begin March 1st, 2009. County Committee advisors serve for a 12-month period not to exceed 9 consecutive years.

Interested individuals should mail their letters to the Crawford County Farm Service Agency, 3115 SR 98, Bucyrus Ohio, 44820. If you have any questions regarding this position, please contact Jim Greve, County Executive Director at (419) 562-8936 ext. 2, or by email at jim.greve@oh.usda.gov.

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.

Payment Limits & Direct Attribution

For commodity and disaster programs under the new farm bill, the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation was reduced from $2.5 million from all sources to a three-year average **non-farm AGI of $500,000** such that a person or entity shall not be eligible for such programs if the non-farm AGI exceeds $500,000. Also, under the new regulations, an individual or entity must have a 3-year average AGI less than or equal to $750,000 per year from farm income in order to qualify for direct payments issued under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

For conservation programs, the average nonfarm AGI limitation is $1 million or less for eligibility. However, an individual or entity who has non-farm AGI in excess of $1 million remains eligible for conservation programs only if 66.66 percent or more of the total AGI is derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations. In addition, the AGI limitation for conservation programs may be waived on a case-by-case basis if it is determined that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected.

Program payments are limited by direct attribution to individuals or entities. A legal entity is defined as an entity created under Federal or State law that owns land or an agricultural commodity, product or livestock. Through direct attribution, payment limitation is based on the total payments received by the individual, both directly and indirectly. Qualifying spouses are eligible to be considered separate persons for payment limitation purposes, rather than being automatically combined under one limitation.

Individuals and entities must be "actively engaged in farming" with respect to a farming operation in order to be eligible for specified payments and benefits. To be "actively engaged in farming," the individual or entity must make significant contributions to the farming operation of: (1) capital, equipment, land, or a combination; and (2) personal labor or active personal management, or a combination.

Under rules in effect since 1988, not every member of an entity had to contribute active personal labor or management. The interim final rule requires each partner, stockholder, or member with an ownership interest to make a contribution of active personal labor or active personal management. The contribution must be regular and substantial, and documented as well as separate and distinct from any other member's contribution. The rule limits the ability of passive stockholders to continue to realize benefits from the entity.

For more detailed information contact your local FSA office.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Selected Interest Rates for January 2009	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.500%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Beginning Farmer Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.125%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	3.500%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.625%

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 your local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to gather financial records and starting thinking about filling out a 1040. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement. The website is available at: http://customerstatement.usda.gov/.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

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.

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 your 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.

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 online at:
http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/Forms/FSA0211-0211A_081217V02.pdf.

Dates to Remember	
Jan. 19	Martin Luther's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Feb. 2	**Deadline** on 2008 LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn lamb pelts.
Feb. 16	President's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2009 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
Mar. 31	Final Availability for 2008 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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

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