



NEWSLETTER



Crawford County FSA Office

3115 State Route 98,
Bucyrus, Ohio 44820

419-562-8936 phone
419-562-8815 fax

Hours

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

February 2011

County Office Staff

Jim Greve,
County Executive
Director

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

Sorghum Checkoff Referendum Scheduled

USDA will conduct a referendum on the Sorghum Checkoff Program **Feb. 1-28, 2011**, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Ballots may be obtained in person, by mail or facsimile at county FSA offices, or via the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage then click on the "Go to the Sorghum Referendum Page" link to obtain an electronic ballot.

Any eligible person engaged in the production or importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide documentation such as a sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum.

Sorghum Checkoff is a national, coordinated, self-help marketing program designed to strengthen the position of sorghum in the market place, maintain and expand existing domestic and foreign markets and uses for sorghum, and develop new markets and uses for sorghum.

CRP General Sign-up Begins March 14

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is offering a general sign-up period from **March 14, 2011 through April 15, 2011**. This is the second consecutive year that USDA has offered a general CRP sign-up.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and develop wildlife habitat.

Landowners enrolled in the CRP program receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP can be offered during sign-up if all eligibility requirements are met. CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall can make new contract offers during the sign-up period. Contracts awarded during this general sign-up will become effective October 1, 2011.

For more information, please contact the Crawford county office at (419)562-8936 or view the CRP General Sign-up factsheet go to:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crpsignupjan.pdf .

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 FSA county office. The application and service fee must be filed **by March 15th**, the deadline date for 2011 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.

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.

Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2010 crop year honey are available **until March 31, 2011**. The national loan rate for honey is \$.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate; so LDPs 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.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

FSA has funding to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more that 10 years;
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm;
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA;
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median farm size; and
- Also, the applicant must meet the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which he/she is applying.

Note: All applicants for direct farm ownership loans must have participated in a business operation of a farm for at least three years.

To find out more about loans for Beginning Farmer and Ranchers and more basic qualifications required, contact your local FSA county office to setup an appointment with a loan approval official.

Conservation Loan Program

The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the funding necessary to implement conservation measures on their land. The available limit for a direct CL is \$300,000, and the limit for a guaranteed CL is \$1,119,000.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with applicants to develop a conservation plan containing approved conservation practices. Examples of some conservation practices are: water conservation structures, forest cover, permanent pastures, manure digesters, and other installations.

For more information on the Conservation Loan program, contact your local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official. Or visit the Ohio FSA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh and select the "County Offices" link to locate the nearest FSA office.

Selected Interest Rates for February 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.250%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.750%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Conservation Loans	4.750%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	3.625%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.000%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	0.250%

County Committee Meetings

The four-member Crawford County Farm Service Agency committee meets once a month. The committee has established 8:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month as its regular meeting time and the Crawford County FSA office as its meeting place.

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

County committee members are:
 Chairman, Allen Schimpf, representing LAA-1.
 Steve Miller, representing LAA-3.
 Rick Niese, representing LAA-2
 Trudy Ruehle, County Committee Advisor.

2009 SURE Sign-up Continues

The sign-up period for the 2009 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program continues **until July 29, 2011**. SURE provides benefits for 2008 - 2011 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. USDA encourages producers who suffered losses during the 2009 crop year to visit their local FSA office to learn more about the SURE program.

To be eligible for SURE a farm must have:

- At least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance;
- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;

Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

For more information on the 2009 SURE program, visit the Crawford county office or the website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure>.

2011 DCP Sign-up Continues

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) continues through **June 1, 2011**. USDA encourages producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign-up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2011 DCP contract. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service saves producers time, reduces paperwork and speeds up contract processing at USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. It is available to all producers who are eligible 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 the service, producers 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.

For more information on the 2011 DCP program, visit the Crawford county office or the website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp.

1099-G

Producers who have received payments from FSA should have received a CCC-1099-G. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to producers during the previous calendar year. 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.

When the CCC-1099-G is received, it should be checked with your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with an eAuthentication user ID and password may access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity webpage.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, contact your local FSA office.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing an eligible commodity. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the eligible commodity.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting, and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards.

FSA offers MALs on honey, wool & mohair, an assortment of grains, and other approved agricultural commodities.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans. The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

For more details on marketing assistance loans contact your local FSA office.

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 21	President's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2011 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
Mar. 31	Final Availability for 2010 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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CCC-927 or CCC-928 Must Be Sent To IRS

Producers who participated in 2009 or 2010 programs subject to adjusted gross income limitations (AGI) had to certify compliance with AGI rules. The average AGI verification process for 2009 and 2010 payment eligibility requires all program participants to provide written consent to IRS for the disclosure of certain information to FSA.

On October 6, 2010, a letter was mailed to producers who have not submitted:

- CCC-927: "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Individual Form"
- CCC-928: "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Legal Entity form"

Individuals and legal entities, including members of legal entities, that certified to average AGI compliance for 2009 and/or 2010 payment eligibility must submit a completed CCC-927 or CCC-928 to IRS regardless of whether they received program benefits directly or as a member of a joint operation or entity. These forms must be submitted to IRS in order to avoid a demand for refund of program payments and benefits received.

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

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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 20250-9410, 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). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."