Crawford County FSA Office

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Bucyrus, Ohio 44820

419-562-8936 phone
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

March 2011

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

CRP Sign-up Begins March 14

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is offering a general sign-up to begin **March 14, 2011, through April 15, 2011**. During the sign-up period, farmers and landowners may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general sign-up at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

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.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that shows the environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits) and cost. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

For more information, please contact the Crawford county office at (419)562-8936 or to 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.

Producers who currently have NAP coverage or who are interested in coverage are encouraged to keep accurate production records. NAP coverage is only available for crops not covered under the Federal Crop Insurance program. Producers are reminded about the need for insurance coverage on crops in order to remain eligible for the agency's Disaster Assistance Programs such as SURE, LFP, TAP, and ELAP. Producers must purchase at least catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance for all insurable crops and producers must apply for coverage before a disaster strikes.

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.

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.

Name of County Committee Advisor Appointed

Congratulations to Trudy Ruehle! Trudy was re-appointed as advisor to represent farmers on Crawford county committee. Trudy was appointed to her 3rd consecutive term which began on March 1, 2011.

Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees.

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

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Enrollment Ends Soon

The Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications for the 2011 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). The deadline for submitting GRP applications is **March 18, 2011** for applicants to submit offers for **GRP easement** and **GRP rental contracts**.

The GRP is a jointly administered program between FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). GRP assists landowners and operators to protect grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving and restoring grassland resources on eligible private lands.

Both agencies accept applications on a continuous basis; however, ranking dates are established to evaluate and select applications for current year funding. Any applications received after this date shall be retained until the next ranking period. Producers not accepted during previous GRP sign-ups must reapply to be considered for enrollment in 2011.

Preference will be given to:

- Working grazing operations with an approved grazing plan;
- Land that has been historically dominated by grassland and provides habitat for animal or plant populations of significant ecological value;
- Land which contains historical or archeological resources; and
- Land expiring from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) on Sept. 30, 2011.

Only landowners may voluntarily apply for GRP easements. Either owners or operators may voluntarily apply for GRP rental contracts as long as the operator can provide proper documents to show control of rental acres during the entire contract period. Participants must meet adjusted gross income requirements, must be in conservation compliance and cannot exceed the $50,000 payment limitation.

Rental contracts may be for duration of 10 years, 15 years or 20 years and rental payments vary by county and range from $10.00 to $16.50 per acre per year of the contract. Easements are permanent and a payment is based on the geographic area rate cap of the land less the grazing value.

Interested landowners and operators may visit their local USDA Service Center to find out more about enrolling in the GRP or other Conservation programs.

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Process to Resolve Discrimination Claims of Hispanic and Women Farmers

As part of continued efforts to close the chapter on allegations that discrimination occurred at USDA in past decades, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the establishment of a process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans.

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least $1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to $160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. This announcement follows the Obama Administration's settlement of longstanding litigation brought by African American farmers and Native American farmers.

In conjunction with this announcement, USDA is launching an outreach effort to potential claimants that will include a call center for farmers and ranchers, a website, public service announcements, and in-person meetings around the country. Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov.

Beginning February 25, 2011, individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential

claimants. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

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 may accept any late-filed applications received through September 30, of the program year.

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 .

Livestock Programs Available

FSA administers several programs that may be available to assist livestock producers who are dealing with problems caused by the winter weather. Producers need to document the number and kind of livestock that have died as a direct result of these winter storms. There may also be situations where producers are transporting feed to their livestock. Producers should document these additional costs.

Among the key programs are the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). For livestock death losses to be eligible under LIP, producers must file a notice of loss with their local FSA office within 30 calendar days from when the loss is apparent to the producer.

Contact your local FSA office for additional information.

Asparagus Loss Assistance Payment Program

Domestic asparagus producers may sign-up for compensation due to marketing losses resulting from imports during the 2004 through 2007 crop years. Producers may apply for compensation **through April 8, 2011**.

The Asparagus Revenue Market Loss Assistance Payment Program (ALAP) is authorized by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will provide an allocation of $7.5 million for payments for asparagus marketed as fresh, and $7.5 million for payments for processed asparagus.

ALAP provides a one-time payment to eligible asparagus producers. Maximum per pound payment rates are $1.06 per pound for fresh market asparagus and $1.08 per pound for asparagus marketed for processing. Payments to asparagus producers will be calculated for each asparagus farm operation based on their 2003 marketed production quantities.

If the total value of payments claimed at the maximum payment rates exceeds available funding, payments will be factored uniformly by the CCC to limit total payments to the funds available. ALAP Program payments to producers will be capped at $100,000 per producer per marketing category (fresh and processed). Producers who have an average gross income (AGI) in excess of $2,500,000 for calendar years 2003 through 2005 will not be eligible for program benefits. Eligible producers must also have produced and marketed asparagus in commercial quantities in commercial markets in the U.S. during both of the 2003 and 2007 crop years. A producer that did not harvest asparagus in 2007 does not meet that eligibility requirement.

For more information on the ALAP Program, contact your local FSA office.

Selected Interest Rates for March 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.500%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Conservation Loans	4.750%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	3.875%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250%

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 if 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, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members can not exceed $40,000.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are $500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; $750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and $1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits.

These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: Participants can also visit the Ohio FSA State website and download the forms at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh under the *"I Want To"* section. The AGI factsheet is available at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/irsmou10.pdf .

Dates to Remember	
Mar. 14	CRP General Sign-up begins.
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2010 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
Mar. 18	Deadline to submit applications for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP).
Mar. 31	Final Availability for 2010 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
April 8	Deadline to apply for ALAP benefits.
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
May 31	Deadline to apply for 2010 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.
June 1	**Deadline** to sign-up for 2011 ACRE and Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program. USDA may accept late-filed applications.
June 15	County Committee Nomination period begins.
June 15	Deadline to submit the CCC-927 and CCC-928 consent forms to the IRS.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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