



Crawford County FSA Office

3115 State Route 98
Bucyrus, Ohio 44820

419-562-8936 phone
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Hours

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

March 2012

County Office Staff

Jim Greve,
County Executive
Director

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Farm Loan Manager

Crystal McCown,
Kate Brause,
Gail Walter,
Heather Hiler,
Monica Finney, Temp
Nancy Kochel, Temp
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Randy Hiler,
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Visit our Website at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

CRP General Sign-up Begins March 12

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is offering a general sign-up period from **March 12, 2012 through April 6, 2012**. This is the third 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 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, 2012.

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/crp_general_sign_up_pf.pdf.

DCP/ACRE Sign-up

Enrollment for the 2012 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) continues through **June 1, 2012**. 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 2012 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 2012 DCP program, visit the Crawford county office or the website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The sign-up for 2010 SURE losses continue through **June 1, 2012**.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties, that have incurred crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, except grazed crops.
- Any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

Eligible producers who suffered losses during the 2010 crop year are encouraged to visit the Crawford County FSA office to learn more about the SURE program. FSA also has SURE information available at www.fsa.usda.gov/sure.

Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans through the Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program. The LC Guaranteed Loans will be offered to the owner of a farm who wishes to sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning farmer or a farmer who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.



A land contract is an installment contract between a buyer and a seller for the sale of real property, in which complete ownership of the property is not transferred until all payments under the contract have been made.

Guarantees can be used for financing the purchase of a farm with a purchase price up to \$500,000 on a new land contract. FSA offers two types of guarantees under this program. The seller may request either of the following:

- **Prompt Payment Guarantee:** A guarantee of up to the amount of three amortized annual installments plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance; or
- **Standard Guarantee:** A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

To find out if you qualify contact the Crawford County FSA office to setup an appointment with a loan approval official.

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 2012 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.

Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2011 crop year honey are available until April 2, 2012. 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.

County Committee Advisors

Crawford County FSA County Office Committee (COC) has just named Melinda Sellman of Galion as COC Advisor. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees. County committee members and their county executive directors, reach out to producer groups who are under-represented on county committees to find the right person to serve as Advisor.

Advisors serve for a 12 month period not to exceed nine consecutive years. They attend each COC meeting, including executive sessions and they participate. One of their primary responsibilities is to increase awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections. They help develop interest and incentives for socially disadvantaged group members to consider FSA work as a career. Advisors also solicit candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process.

Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC)

Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with HELC and WC provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system.

Wetland conservation provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility, it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

Maintaining Stored Grain Quality

With the unusually warm winter temperatures, producers are reminded to keep an eye on the condition and quality of the stored grain. Remember to contact your local FSA office if you notice changes in the condition and quality of the stored grain.

Selected Interest Rates for March 2012	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.375%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	1.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	2.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	2.250%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	2.500%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call the county office before you haul any grain under loan.

New Continuous CRP Initiative

FSA has announced a new conservation initiative to protect up to 750,000 acres of the nation's most highly erodible croplands. This initiative will assist producers with targeting their most highly erodible cropland (land with an erodibility index of 20 or greater) by enabling them to plant wildlife-friendly, long-term cover through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Producers can enroll land on a continuous basis beginning this summer at Crawford County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. With the use of soil survey and geographic information system data, local FSA staff can quickly determine a producer's eligibility for the initiative.

Producers are encouraged to contact the Crawford County FSA office or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp-hel_initiative.pdf for additional information regarding this new Continuous CRP initiative.

Pigford Settlement Claims Filing Period Open for African American Farmers and Ranchers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack would like to remind African American farmers and ranchers that the period to file a claim in the Pigford II settlement is open. African American farmers and ranchers who believe they are entitled to compensation under the Pigford II settlement must file a claim within 180 days in order to receive cash payment or loan forgiveness.

The USDA and Department of Justice announced an agreement with African American farmers to settle the Pigford II litigation for \$1.25 billion. Congress passed the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 that funded the settlement in November 2010, and the bill was signed by President Obama in December 2010.

The settlement arises from a class action lawsuit against USDA that alleges the Department discriminated against African-Americans who applied for or attempted to apply for farm loans or other farm benefits between January 1, 1981 and December 31, 1996. The settlement applies only to African-American farmers who meet specific eligibility requirements, including the requirement that they previously submitted a request to file a late claim in the 1999 Pigford I class action Consent Decree.

The filing period opened November 14, 2011, and continues for 180 days, until May 11, 2012.

Claimant services representatives can also be reached through calling 1-877-810-8110 or 1-866-950-5547. Claimants must 1 package (by calling the number or visiting the webs package will be mailed to claimants. All those inter or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend a meeting and contact the website or claims telephone number.

- The website is: www.blackfarmercase.com
- The call number is: 1-877-810-8110 or 1-866-950-5547
- Claims period: November 14, 2011 to May 11, 2012

Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance Loans, also referred to as Commodity Loans, are available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if you regain beneficial interest.

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.

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 20	President's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Mar. 12	CRP General Sign-up Period starts and continues through April 6.
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2012 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
April 2	Final Availability for 2011 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
May 28	Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
May 31	Deadline to apply for 2011 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.
June 1	Deadline to sign-up for 2012 ACRE and Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program.
June 1	Deadline to sign-up for the 2010 SURE program.

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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.

GovDelivery

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail. Producers can subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe> .

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