Hancock County USDA Service Center

Hancock County FSA
7868 Co. Rd. 140
Findlay, Ohio 45840
419-422-5438 (phone)
419-422-5105 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/OH

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

County Committee
Michael Conley
Karen Conine
Richard Cupples

Co. Committee meets
2nd Wednesday of each month @ 9:00 a.m.
@ FSA Office.

Staff:
Sue Stahl
Casey Gunder
Diane Parke
Janis Wittenmyer
John Deeds, Field
Steve Inbody

SEPTEMBER 2011

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to $300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of $1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

Livestock Producers Reminded of FSA's 2011 Livestock Disaster Program Deadline

Eligible producers who lose livestock due to adverse weather, such as hurricanes, floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat and extreme cold, on or after January 1, 2011, and before October 1, 2011, can sign-up for the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Livestock losses had to occur no later than 60 days after the adverse weather event, but prior to October 1, 2011. For livestock losses that occur in calendar year 2011, producers will have 30 days after the death to file a notice of loss to FSA, but not later than October 31, 2011 to apply for payment.

Adequate documentation must prove the death of eligible livestock occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. If adequate verifiable proof of death records documentation is not available, a livestock producer may provide reliable records, along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory, as proof of death.

Certifications of livestock deaths by third parties, who are not affiliated with the farming operation, may be accepted only if verifiable proof of death records or reliable proof of death records along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory records are not available.

LIP indemnity payments will be based on 75 percent of the fair market value of the livestock as determined by FSA.

Producers who have questions regarding livestock disaster assistance program eligibility and the application process should contact the Hancock County FSA office at 419-422-5438 or visit www.fsa.usda.gov .

Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation loan it cannot be removed or disposed of without prior county office staff authorization or repayment. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, call the county office staff, before you HAUL!

HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit: www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation, please visit: www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement please visit: www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting the website or by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center. USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential claimants. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Message from Secretary Vilsack

Some recent news stories have focused on suspicions and rumors about the Obama administration's work on agriculture. The truth is that the President, EPA Administrator Jackson and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and producers so we can be the best possible partner for successful operations. These efforts are helping farmers enjoy some of the best incomes they have seen in decades.

Sadly, rumors and misconceptions have become the norm, not the exception, especially when it comes to regulations and how they might affect our nation's producers.

First, it was that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was considering treating spilled milk like an oil spill. Not true. And in terms of water regulations, EPA has made it clear that recent rules do not seek to regulate land that occasionally ponds during heavy rains.

Regulation of farm dust is another frequently repeated myth, based on a congressionally-mandated review that the EPA has conducted every 5 years for decades. We all know you can't farm without dust. And EPA has no plans to propose stricter standards.

And the Department of Transportation announced just last week that it has no intention of proposing any new regulations or rules on the transport of agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from a farm.

Perhaps more importantly, the Obama Administration has worked to be the most accessible and collaborative in history. The President and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and other producers and actively collaborating across the federal government to help everyone understand the facts of American agriculture.

I maintain a regular dialogue with Lisa Jackson at EPA and we even visited farms in Iowa together. The collaborative partnership we enjoy is reflected in our policies: pursuing common-sense standards that will give farmers a seat at the table and let them make the decisions they feel are best for their own operations.

One result of this sort of collaboration is that in 2009 and 2010, the federal government issued fewer new rules than it did in 2007 and 2008.

As you hear from producers about their concerns, I know you will continue to be helpful in providing them with the information they need to help their operations succeed, and not to get caught up in rumor or exaggeration. And you should urge folks with additional questions to contact the EPA directly, where they should be able to get further help in separating fact from fiction.

EPA and USDA understand that if we are going to solve the major environmental challenges of our time – combating climate change, reducing soil erosion, and ensuring an ample supply of clean water and healthy food for our families – farmers must help lead the way.

CRP Annual Payments

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Staff wants to be certain CRP annual payments are correctly and timely made. Please notify your local FSA office if: your mailing address has changed; payee ID numbers have changed; or participant shares have changed. If you have established a trust agreement as a result of an estate planning process, or recently formed an entity (partnership, corporation, LLC, etc.) and you are enrolled in CRP, please report these changes as soon as possible to ensure proper payments are made. The easiest way to tell if the correct person(s) are being paid is to review the names and payment shares on the CRP-1 contract.

Ohio FSA Announces Sign-up Deadline for Biomass Crop Assistance Program Project Area

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced that producers **have until Sept. 16th** to sign-up for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) in northeast Ohio. Acreage in Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake and Trumbull counties, Ohio and Crawford, Erie and Mercer counties, Pennsylvania, is designated to grow giant miscanthus. See the map below for what counties and portions are included in BCAP project area 5.

BCAP Project Area 5 targets 2011 enrollment of 5,344 acres. This acreage will be selected to grow giant miscanthus, a sterile hybrid warm-season grass that can be converted into energy to be used for heat, power, liquid biofuels and bio-based products.

Sign-up began June 20, 2011 for producers interested to enroll acreage in the BCAP program within this project area. With the Sept. 16, 2011 sign-up deadline approaching, anyone who is interested in BCAP should contact their local FSA office as soon as possible.

The sponsor for this project is Aloterra Energy, LLC and the project area surrounds the company's biomass conversion facility in Conneaut, Ohio.

Approved producers will be eligible for reimbursements of up to 75 percent of the cost of establishing the bioenergy perennial crop and receive up to five years of annual payments. Bioenergy facilities are those facilities that produce heat, power, biobased products, or advanced biofuels from biomass feedstocks.

Producers interested in participating in BCAP should visit their local county FSA office for additional information and application. Information about BCAP can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/BCAP .

FSA Informs Producers of SURE Eligibility on 2011 and 2012 Crops

Farm Service Agency (FSA), would like to inform eligible producers which may and may not suffer loss because of disaster events occurring on or before September 30, 2011, about how the 2008 Farm Bill provisions that authorized SURE will be administered for 2011 and 2012 crops.

The SURE Program was authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) to provide assistance to producers suffering crop losses because of disasters on or before September 30, 2011. To receive SURE payments; an eligible producer on a SURE farm must have a qualifying loss. A qualifying loss is defined as a loss of 10 percent or more on at least 1 crop of economic significance because of disaster on a farm that is either:

- located in a disaster county; or
- if not located in any disaster county or county contiguous to such a county, but has an overall loss greater than or equal to 50 percent of normal production on the farm (expected revenue for all crops on the farm) because of disaster.

At the time of filing the 2011 or 2012 SURE application for payment, the producer will be required to identify and certify the crop of economic significance on the SURE farm that suffered the 10 percent loss because of disaster occurring on or before September 30, 2011.

Crops are **not** required to be harvested on or before September 30, 2011, to maintain eligibility for SURE.

The determination of whether a producer's certification of crop loss is because of a disaster occurring on or before September 30, 2011, FSA will review the crop's planting and growing period, asserted disaster event, and any other pertinent information that may be relevant or available.

For more information about the SURE program, visit your local FSA office or the website at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure.

Selected Interest Rates for September 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.625%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	2.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	2.875%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	3.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Succession in Interest

If you have made any changes that affect your interest in base acres since you signed your last Direct and Counter-cyclical Program contract, you must report these ***successions-in-interest*** to the county committee by Sept. 30, so that a final determination can be made on who is eligible for the program on the farm.

Hancock County FSA Office
7868 County Road 140 Suite C
Findlay, Ohio 45840

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Changes that qualify as a succession-in-interest include:

- A sale of land
- A change of operator or producer, including a an increase or decrease in the number of partners
- A foreclosure, bankruptcy or involuntary loss of the farm.
- A change in producer shares to reflect changes in the producer's share of the crop(s) that were originally approved on the contract.

If a succession-in-interest has taken place, you, as the "predecessor," are required to refund any advance DCP payments you received for the affected base acres before a payment can be made to the "successor."

Not reporting a succession-in-interest can result in contract termination and a loss of program benefits for all producers involved.

Dates to Remember	
Sept. 5	Labor Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Sept. 16	Deadline to sign-up for BCAP in NE Ohio.
Sept. 30	Deadline to obtain 2011 NAP coverage for Winter Wheat, Rye, Barley and Speltz.
Sept. 30	Deadline to file a notice of loss and an application for payment for ELAP, LFP and LIP programs for 2011.
Oct. 11	Columbus Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Nov. 4	County committee ballots mailed to voters.
Nov. 11	Veterans Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Nov. 20	**Last day to apply** for coverage for asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey and maple syrup.
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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

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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."