



NEWSLETTER



Sandusky County FSA Office

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

December 2011

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

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

Sign-up for the 2010 SURE Program began Nov. 14, 2011 and will end June 1, 2012. The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that occurred 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 on the farm.

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

2012 DCP/ACRE Sign-up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) sign up will begin Jan. 23, 2012 and will end June 1, 2012. Here are some IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Owner signed proof of cash rent is required for 2012
- All producers planting crops on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- Any changes on the farm after June 1st **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
 - Ownership changes
 - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
 - Change in crop shares arrangements

Note: Changes to DCP / ACRE contracts cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

Ownership Records Reviewed

The Sandusky County Farm Service Agency is continually reviewing Farm Ownership records on the Sandusky County Auditor's website to ensure FSA records are up to date. Please notify our office immediately when an ownership change occurs. If we discover a discrepancy between the Auditor's records and FSA records, we will notify the affected landowner via letter.

ACRE Program Production

Production for the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) is required to be submitted annually to the Farm Service Agency for producers enrolled in this program. The deadline to report your 2011 crop year production for corn, soybeans and wheat for the ACRE Program to the Farm Service Agency is July 15, 2012. Although the deadline is a few months away, please provide us your production while the information is readily available to you. Call us today to schedule an appointment.

Selected Interest Rates for December 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.500%
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	1.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	2.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	2.250%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	2.625%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Pigford Settlement Claims Filing Period Open

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 has opened. 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.



In February, 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 register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more 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.

New AGI Form for 2012

On September 28, 2011, FSA began using CCC-931 "Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information" for all 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 programs that are subject to AGI compliance. FSA will no longer accept CCC-926, CCC-927, or CCC-928 for any program. The new form is a combination of the Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information forms previously used by FSA.

Form CCC-931 is available at your local FSA office or to download the form visit the Ohio FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/oh and the form is located under the section titled "I Want To" on the homepage. Producers may print, complete and mail the form to their local FSA office. FSA employees will review the form for accuracy before forwarding it to the IRS. If CCC-931 is incomplete, the producer will be notified and corrections will be completed prior to FSA forwarding it to the IRS. Producers with FSA-211, "Power of Attorneys" are not permitted to use the FSA-211 to complete the CCC-931.

Producers who failed to file these forms before October 2011 will soon receive a notice from the National Office stating that the producer is ineligible for 2009, 2010 and/or 2011 payments. Without these forms on file, producers will not be eligible to receive USDA program payments. For more information please contact your local FSA office.

Commodity Loans

Producers considering a loan on their stored grain before the end of the year must allow sufficient time before December 31st, for loan processing. Commodity loans require significant processing, so please ensure you visit the FSA promptly if you want your loan processed before the end of December. Commodity loans, also referred to as Marketing Assistance 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. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if you regain beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires that you comply with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions; report crop acreage and ensure the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been grown by an eligible producer, be harvested and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers are not required to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans. Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may cause administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denying future farm-stored loans. The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization or providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Report Farm Record Changes for 2012

Producers may now report changes to their farming operation for the 2012 crop year. It is important for landowners and operators to report changes to the Farm Service Agency to ensure USDA records are accurate and proper benefits are paid. Some changes that must be reported to the Farm Service Agency include but are not limited to farm ownership, farm operator, cropland acreage and bank account changes. To process a farm ownership change, the current landowner must provide proof of ownership such as a copy of a deed. If there is a change in operator on a farm for the 2012 crop year, this change should be reported to FSA by the farm owner. Changes in cropland acreage or land use are quite common in Sandusky County. The most common cropland changes that must be reported to the Farm Service Agency include cropland sold or devoted to a non-agricultural use such as residential housing, farm buildings or industrial use.

IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on the CCC-1099-G is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) and Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement (LECREP) Program are private lands environmental improvement programs that allow participants the opportunity to enroll acreage in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality, and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

CRP program participation is voluntary. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and incentive payments for certain practices, and cost share for establishment. To be eligible for enrollment in the CCRP or LECREP, participants and acreage must meet program requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into CCRP or LECREP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on CRP enrollments, please contact your local FSA office or to read the Continuous CRP factsheet go to: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_contsign_up_072610.pdf.

CRP Compliance Reminders

Producers and landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are reminded of their obligations to maintain the conservation practice through the life of the contract. Failure to maintain the practice may result in the loss of important program benefits or contract termination which could result in the repayment of all CRP payments, plus interest and liquidated damages. Examples of violations of the terms of your CRP include but are not limited to: Haying or Grazing the CRP Acreage, Harvesting the CRP Acreage, Unauthorized Mowing (Annual or cosmetic mowing is not permitted), Failure to maintain the practice originally approved in the CRP Conservation Plan. Acreage enrolled in CRP shall not be used to store equipment or other materials. Producers enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program are required to report the CRP acreage to the Farm Service Agency by the July 15, 2012 certification deadline.

2012 DCP Sign Up Reminders

The Sandusky County FSA Office reminds producers that sign up for the 2012 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) begins January 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012. ***For the 2012 crop year, NO ADVANCE will be available due to the provisions originally passed in the 2008 Farm Bill.*** Producers will be required to submit evidence of cash rent signed by the landowner for the 2012 crop year, including owners that are Revocable Trusts.

Notice of Loss Filing Extended for FSA's Disaster Assistance Programs

FSA announced that producers interested in applying for losses on or before Sept. 30, 2011, have until, the earlier of 30 days after loss becomes apparent, ***but no later than December 29, 2011*** to file a notice of loss to be eligible for the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill: the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE); the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Disasters occurring after this date are not eligible for program coverage.

Once notices of losses are filed for LFP, LIP or ELAP, producers will have until January 30, 2012, to submit all required documentation and complete the application for payment. Producers have 90 days from the time a loss is apparent to file an application for TAP. Adequate documentation must prove the loss occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. Producers should contact their local FSA county offices with any questions about LFP, TAP, ELAP or LIP. Information on the disaster programs can be found at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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. Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if your farm is facing financial challenges and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,514,000.

For detailed information, contact your local FSA county office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

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
- Meets 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.

FSA Moving to Electronic Information

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. FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers. Producers may now receive free e-mail updates by contacting your local FSA office or go online and subscribe at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>

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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."

LDPs for Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have until Jan. 31, 2012, to apply for Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for unshorn pelts produced during the 2011 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.

Dates to Remember	
Dec. 5	Last day to return voted Ballots in county committee election.
Dec. 26	Christmas Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 1	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.
Jan. 2	New Year's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 23	Sign-up Begins for the 2012 DCP/ACRE Program.
Jan. 31	Deadline on 2011 LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn lamb pelts.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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