



Ohio FSA State Office

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Hours

Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

January 2011

State Office Staff

Steve Maurer,
State Executive
Director

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

2009 SURE Sign-up Begins Jan. 10

The sign-up period for the 2009 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program begins on Jan. 10, 2011. SURE is one of five disaster programs included in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 that provides assistance to farmers and ranchers who have suffered losses due to natural disasters.

This program provides a tremendous amount of assistance to producers who have suffered from natural disasters, and is part of the 'safety net' designed to assist farmers and ranchers who feed America and the

world. 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 any FSA county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure>.

LDP Deadline on Unshorn Wool, Mohair and Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have **until Jan. 31, 2011**, to apply for LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts produced during the 2010 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.

County Committee Minority Advisors

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for under-represented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. County committee members and their county executive directors, actively reach out to producer groups who are under-represented on county committees.

Eligibility requirements for COC Advisor nominee include:

- be actively participating in farming or ranching in the county or area;
- be willing and available to serve as an advisor, if appointed; and
- indicate in writing their willingness to serve.

Duties and Responsibilities of COC Advisors include:

- attend each COC meeting, including executive sessions;
- participate in all deliberations;



- increase awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections, by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions;
- help to develop interest and incentives in socially disadvantaged group members for considering FSA work as a career;
- active soliciting candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process; and
- able to perform special duties at COC s request.
- Note: Advisors do not have authority to sign documents.

Interested individuals should submit a written letter that outlines their abilities and qualifications, as well as their willingness to serve, postmarked by Jan. 21, 2011. The local County Committee will review these submissions and recommend a minority advisor to the Ohio FSA State Committee. The Ohio FSA State Committee will appoint the minority advisor, whose term will begin March 1st, 2011. County Committee advisors serve for a 12-month period not to exceed 9 consecutive years.

Interested individuals should mail their letters to their local County Farm Service Agency. If you have any questions regarding this position, please contact your local County Executive Director.

USDA Introduces an Online Tool to Assist Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

An online tool has been established that can link retiring farmers who have expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts with beginning farmers who are interested in bringing the land into production. The new online resource, TIP Net, is a website provided by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), producers with land for sale or lease are introduced to qualified beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who want to buy or rent land for their operations.

The interest in TIP during the first six months of implementation has far exceeded our expectations. This tool should make TIP even more effective in facilitating the transition of land to our next generation of farmers.

TIP provides up to two additional Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payments to a retired or retiring owner or operator with an expiring CRP contract. To qualify, the landowner must sell or

lease the CRP land to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer so the new operator can convert some or all of the land to production using sustainable grazing or crop production methods.

For beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers who cannot qualify for conventional credit, FSA offers financing as well. FSA makes direct loans and guaranteed loans made by conventional farm lenders to finance the purchase and operation of a farm. Each fiscal year, the agency targets a significant portion of its direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loan funds to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers. In addition to the funding reserves, FSA operates a special "down payment" loan program to assist socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers in purchasing a farm. Like TIP, this program can help retiring farmers transfer their land to future generations.

For additional information on FSA farm loan contact your local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official. TIP Net can be found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tipnet>.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Financial Inquiries for FSA Producers

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to gather financial records and start thinking about filling out a 1040. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data through Financial Inquires for FSA Producers. The site is available under Online Services on the Ohio FSA webpage at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/oh>.

If you need to inquire about a particular electronic deposit, program payment, debt, or 1099G – USDA Level 2 customers can go here to view financial information.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made.

Not applying early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Loan Approval Official for more details and assistance in applying.

Faxed Signatures

Certain faxed signatures shall be accepted for all applicable program forms or other documents approved for faxed signatures, if all other signature requirements are met.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

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.

Selected Interest Rates for January 2011	
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.750
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.500
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500
Emergency Loans	3.750
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.500
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.125
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	3.375
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	3.750
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250

Power of Attorney

FSA has a required power of attorney form available for those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., that enables the participant to designate another person to conduct his or her business at the office. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney.

The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or online at:

http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/Forms/FSA0211-0211A_081217V02.pdf.

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.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has targeted funding for members of Socially Disadvantaged Applicants. A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

For detailed information on loan eligibility or the different loan programs available, contact your local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Dates to Remember

Jan. 1	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.
Jan. 17	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 31	Deadline on 2010 LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn lamb pelts.
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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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."