



April 2007

Berrien County News

USDA Service Center
Berrien County FSA
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Berrien Springs, MI 49103
(269) 471-9111 (phone)
(269) 471-3773 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/

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

County Committee
Calvin Gnodtke
Rodney Winkle
Mary Wagner

Staff
Farm Programs -
Barb Dumke, PT
Sue Kraklau, PT
Nova Little, PT
Marquita Sommer, PT
Hope Gentile, CED

Farm Loans -
Carol Koch, FLO
Paul Wagner, FLO
Delores Whitson, PT



Direct & Counter- cyclical Program

Sign-up is underway for
the 2007 Direct &
Counter-cyclical
Program.

Hello from a New Face!



I want to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Hope Gentile. I am the new County Executive Director, here in Berrien County. I am very excited to be here, coming from the FSA office in St. Joseph County, Michigan, after working there for almost 25 years.

I am married to Chris Gentile and have two sons, Derrick (17) and Zach (21). Derrick is a junior at Sturgis High School and Zach is a sophomore at Western Michigan University. He is majoring in Elementary Education and spends the rest of his time playing baseball for WMU, as the shortstop. Derrick is equally busy in school sports, so I spend a lot of time in the bleachers. When I'm not at work, my favorite pastime is watching my boys.

I look forward to meeting all of you this spring so, please stop by and introduce yourself.

My door is always open!

DCP Deadline Extended

The deadline to sign up for the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical program (DCP) has been extended to August 3rd, 2007. Contracts with signatures obtained after this date, but before September 30th, 2007, will be accepted, **but will be assessed a late-filed sign up fee of \$100 per farm.**

All supporting documentation must be submitted before payments can be issued. Annual acreage reports indicating uses of "ALL" cropland on a farm must be filed by the applicable reporting dates. Acreages reports filed after the applicable final reporting date may be accepted if all requirements are met and a late-filed fee is paid.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ON DCP CONTRACT ACREAGE

Planting fruits or vegetables (FAV's) on DCP contract acres are restricted and non-compliance could be very costly.

FAV's cannot be harvested on contract acres if the farm or producer does not have a history of growing FAV's. Producer history is based on plantings during 1991-1995 or 1998-2001. Producer history is crop specific.

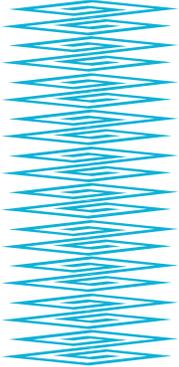
If an FAV history exists, then the DCP payment will be reduced for each acre of contract acreage planted to FAV's. If there is any question whether planting FAV's will cause a problem, contact our office as soon as possible, to avoid penalties.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

Producer will be ineligible for any commodity, conservation, or price support program benefits if their AGI exceeds \$2.5 million, unless 75% or more of the AGI is from farming, ranching or forestry. AGI is based on the average of the three tax years prior to the year benefits are requested. AGI is required from individuals, entities, and members of an entity. This information is NOT subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. AGI helps FSA ensure that payments are made to actual agricultural producers.

Farm Record Changes

Report any farming operation changes so that we can keep your records current. Failure to notify FSA of changes in your farming operation may adversely impact your eligibility for USDA benefits. You should also be aware of Highly Erodible Land Conservation, Wetland



Conservation, Payment Eligibility, and Payment Limitation provisions, which impact your eligibility for Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) payments as well as other USDA program benefits.

Changes to your farming operation may include, but are not limited to, change in the structure of your farming operation, the addition or removal of farms that you operate, changes in your rental agreement, ownership changes, or changes from agricultural to non-agricultural land uses.

Foreign Landowner Reporting Requirements

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owner of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign person who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and other involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Signature Authority For Spouses

A husband and wife can sign on behalf of each other for most Farm Service Agency and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. If you do not want your spouse to have the authority to sign for you in our office, you must have a written notification on file in our office, which denies him/her this signature authority. This procedure does not apply to the commodity loan and Loan Deficiency Program (LDP). Spouses must have an FSA-211(power of attorney) on file to sign commodity loan documents on behalf of each other.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS AND LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS (LDP's)

To be eligible for 9-month Marketing Assistance Loans and LDP's, you must comply with the Sod/Swamp requirements, report all cropland acreage on the farm, have beneficial interest in the commodity on the date the loan or LDP is requested and in the case of a loan, retain beneficial interest while the loan is outstanding, and ensure that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards.

Beneficial interest means you retain the ability to make decisions about the commodity, are responsible for loss or damage to the commodity, and have title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest is lost, the commodity is not eligible for loan or LDP, even if you regain beneficial interest.

If sale proceeds are needed to repay the loan you must request a "Marketing Authorization" from the County Office prior to moving the grain.

The deadline to apply for a loan or LDP on 2006 crop corn or soybeans is May 31, 2007.



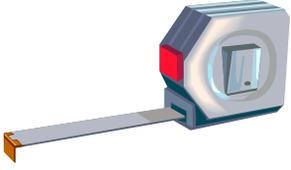
REPORT CHANGES TO YOUR BANK ACCOUNT

You need to notify this office if you close your account, change banks, or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers. It is important that any changes be provided to our office promptly to avoid possible delay of payments.



Measurement Service Fee Change

The fee for measuring field acreages and grain bins has been increased to a basic farm visit fee of \$30 plus \$16 for the first hour and \$8 for every 30 minutes after the first hour. The minimum measurement service fee will now be \$46.



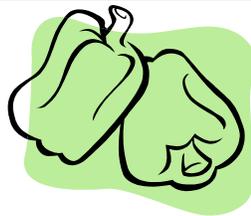
These fees will also be used for late filing of acreage reports.

Acreage Reporting for NAP

Acreage reporting time is rolling around. As a producer, you should remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of program, including the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30 for small grain and July 15 for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

Acreage reports are also required if you want to receive marketing assistance loans, loan deficiency payments, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program payments or Conservation Reserve Program rental payments. On crops for other than NAP purposes, acreage reports are to be certified by June 30 for small grain and July 15 for all other crops.



GREEN PEPPER TRANSPLANTS

The Michigan State FSA Committee has set June 20th as the final planting date for transplanted green peppers state wide. All transplanted green peppers planted after June 20th shall have a late planting deduction applied.

What is Mid-Contract Management of CRP?

Mid-Contract Management of CRP are activities that must be performed on certain practices to ensure the original plant diversity, wildlife benefits, and protections of the soil and water resources are present for the life of the contract.

For CRP practices with grasses, legumes, & wildflowers, research has shown that typically 5-6 years after establishment the site becomes dominated by a thick growth of the grasses. To ensure wildlife habitat benefits in these sites, management is required to encourage legumes and wildflowers, and to ensure the grass is not too thick to limit small wildlife species from traveling through the cover to meet their needs.

This is your responsibility and must be followed according to your conservation plan.

If a variance is needed for the above stated policy, please contact the office. Variances can be pre-approved on a case-by-case basis.

2007 CROP REPORTING

Producers are required to report **ALL** of their cropland, including the field planting date, in order to qualify for several program benefits. Such as:

- Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (**DCP**) payments
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (**LDPs**)
- Conservation Reserve Program (**CRP**) Annual Rental Payments
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (**NAP**) Payments

The acreage reporting deadline is **July 2** for fall-seeded crops and **July 16** for all other crops.

Prevented planted reports must be submitted no later than 15 days after the final planting date for NAP crops and by the final reporting date for non-NAP crops.

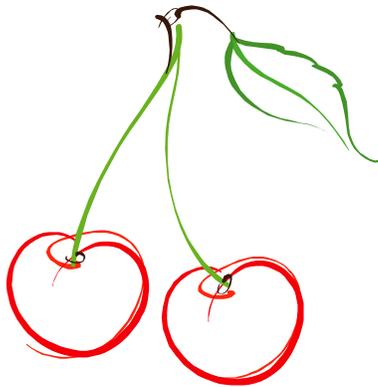
Acreage reports for **failed acreage** must be filed before the crop is destroyed and must be approved by the County Committee (COC).



eGov Customer Registration Process

Did you know you can verify what payments you've received from FSA (known as the Customer Statement), sign up for DCP and request LDP payments from your home computer?

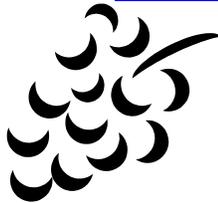
Contact the FSA office today for more information.



Dates to Remember

May 28	Memorial Day Holiday. FSA offices will be closed.
May 31	Deadline to sign up for 2004 crop year Hard White Wheat Incentive Program.
July 2	Final Day to Report Fall Seeded Crops
July 4	Independence Day FSA offices will be closed.
July 16	Final Day to Report Other Crops and CRP

Visit our Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov/**



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Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, visually impaired or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodations are required, contact Hope Gentile, County Executive Director, at (269) 471-9111 ext. 2.