

# Berrien County FSA News

**USDA Service Center  
Berrien County FSA**  
3334 Edgewood  
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  
Kathryn Warmbein, Temp.  
Steve Kraklau, Field Asst.  
Hope Gentile, CED

**Farm Loans -**  
William Hogan, FLM  
Paul Wagner, FLO  
Delores Whitson, PT



## Reporting Crop Acreages

Producers are required to report their planted crops and acres to FSA in order to maintain eligibility for several program benefits:

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

**The deadline to report fall-seeded small grains is July 2, 2007. The deadline to report all other crops is July 16, 2007.**

Crop reports on Form FSA-578, Report of Commodities must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Prevented planting and failed acreage should also be reported.

## DCP Sign-up Extended to August 3<sup>rd</sup>

The DCP Sign-up Deadline has been extended from June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 3, 2007 for **this year only**. Anyone signing after Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> but before September 30<sup>th</sup> will pay a \$100 late fee per farm.

**DCP contract must be signed up annually.**

## Unauthorized Disposition

Loan grain is **not** to be disposed of through feeding, selling, or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization. The financial penalties for this are severe. Always call the office before any loan grain is fed or sold.

## Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low interest loans are available for producers to purchase grain bins, handling equipment and other grain storage equipment. The seven year loans can be used not only for the purchase but construction of the equipment, including drying equipment and remodeling of existing facilities. **The interest rate changes each month and will be applicable** for the life of the loan. Loan installments are made annually over a period of 7 years. All farm storage facility loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. For loans exceeding \$50,000 or where a borrower's aggregate outstanding loan balance exceeds \$50,000 a lien on real estate will be required. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85% of the net cost of the equipment up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment of 15% is required.



# CHANGING SEASONS?

\$

## Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be made by direct deposit unless there is a financial hardship to prevent it. Producers need to notify us when accounts change to prevent delay of payments.

\$

## Farm Changes



All changes in farm ownership, operator or cropland must be reported to FSA to ensure that our farm records are the most up to date as possible. Farm ownership changes must be verified by a deed or current year tax bill showing the current owner. Records must be updated prior to enrollment into any program.

**NOTE:** Farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by August 1, 2007, in order to be effective for farms subject to the 2007 Direct & Counter Cyclical Program (DCP).

## ATTENTION: Clearing Land?

- Are you clearing fence rows to expand cropland for more corn?
- Are you clearing woods or scrub brush to expand cropland?
- Are you intending to crop areas that have not been cropped in the last several years?
- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are you draining a wet area with the intention to crop it?

To remain eligible for USDA benefits the following items must be followed:

- **Not** produce an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after December 23, 1985.
- **Not** convert wetlands to allow planting of any agricultural commodity.
- **Not** plant agricultural commodities on highly erodible fields unless actively applying an approved conservation plan.

If you have any questions that something you plan to do could jeopardize your eligibility, please contact your NRCS or FSA conservation person. With farmers attempting to obtain more cropland, check the status of the soil for conservation compliance before planting new acreage.



## **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.



## 2008 County Committee Election

Berrien County will be holding elections this year in the following townships:

**Hagar, Coloma, Watervliet, Benton, Bainbridge, Sodus and Pipestone**

Anyone interested in being placed on the ballot shall file a nominating petition, Form-669A no later than August 1, 2007.

### **CRP-Mid Contract Management**

This is a requirement for most CRP contracts approved since May of 2002. CRP-Mid Contract Management activities (usually done after the 5<sup>th</sup> year of a 10 year contract) such as light disking, using grass-specific herbicides, interseeding with legumes or wildflowers, or prescribed burning benefit the CRP acreage by increasing the plant diversity which is attractive to many wildlife species. Cost share is available for these actions when completed in accordance with your CRP Conservation Plan. For more information, please contact this office



### **FAX SIGNATURE AUTHORITY**

If a fax option of delivery is used for FSA forms, a FSA-237, Facsimile Signature Authorization and Verification, form must be on file with the FSA County Office before the faxed form can be accepted. To obtain an FSA-237, please contact our office.



### **Maintenance of Idle Acres Enrolled in the DCP Program**

Participants are required to protect all idle contract acres from erosion and weeds.

Idle fields designated as “contract acres” must have a sod cover, crop residue or volunteer grasses. Weeds are not an acceptable cover and must be mowed.

Failure to control weeds on contract acres will cost you program benefits if the County Committee determines the producer failed to demonstrate a good faith effort to control weeds and/or erosion.

### **Just a Note -**

#### **New Programs -**

We realize there are a lot of articles and news broadcast that talk about what is to come and what will be, in regards to farm programs.

Unfortunately, we will not receive any information that can be provided to you, until it is a sure thing.

We appreciate your patience in waiting for accurate information.

#### **Weather -**

This spring has been a trying time again. Cold temperatures and then extreme heat, back to cold temperatures, then high winds and rain that was so hard you didn't want to be outside. With all of the weather that Michigan brings us, please keep in mind, that if you have any damage to your crops, you should notify our office right away.

#### **Outreach –**

FSA is constantly striving to seek persons from minority, female and under-represented groups to ensure they are informed of the agricultural services and programs that our office administers. Any person of legal age who has an interest in a farm as an owner or operator is eligible to participate in FSA programs and the FSA County Committee election. If you or someone you know may be eligible for our programs or would like to be included in our mailings, please contact our office for more information.

### **eGOV Customer Registration Process**

Do you want to be able to sit home and do some of your paperwork instead of coming into the office?

Then access one of the following website:

*USDA Customer Statement -*

<http://customerstatement.usda.gov>

*LDP Signup –*

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp\\_default.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm)

*DCP Signup –*

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp\\_default.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp_default.htm)

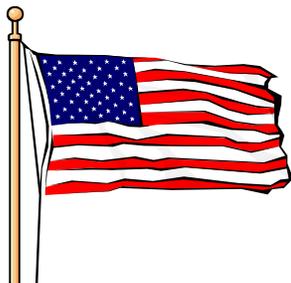
You will have to create a profile and apply for Level 2 access. The process will require a visit to the local office.

Check it out online or contact your local office.



### **Appointments Recommended**

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office.



### ***Civil Rights Complaint Process***

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Dept of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling any FSA Office.

### ***Important Dates to Remember***

July 2	Deadline to report small grains
July 4	Office Closed-Independence Day
July 16	Deadline to report spring seeded crops
Aug 3	Deadline to Sign up for DCP

### **Be Safe this Summer!**

*Hope R. Gentile, CED*

### ***Special Accommodations***

Special Accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, visually impaired or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodation is required, contact Hope R. Gentile, CED at (269) 471-9111.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2900 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.