



November 2007

Branch County News

Branch County FSA
387 N Willowbrook, Ste. F
Coldwater, MI 49036
517-278-2725 (phone)
517-278-5176 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov

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

County Committee
Curt Albright
Neil Carpenter
Kevin Miller
Jill Bucklin

Staff
Kelly Gruner, PT
Joyce Hook, PT
Linda Snyder, PT
Connie Wilkinson, PT
Ernie Davenport, FA
Marlene Marshall, CED

Dates To Remember

November 22
Thanksgiving – Office Closed

December 3
Last Day to Return Election
Ballots

December 20
Marlene's Retirement Open
House

December 25
Christmas – Office Closed

January 1
New Year's Day – Office
Closed

January 21
Martin Luther King Jr.'s
Birthday – Office Closed

Ongoing
Farm Storage Facility Loans

Continuous Conservation
Reserve Program



Congratulations Connie Wilkinson

After 22 ½ years with the Branch County FSA Office, Connie has accepted a position as Conservation Specialist at the Michigan State FSA Office. She will begin her duties at the State Office on November 26, 2007.

Connie has handled many different programs and was an asset to the office. She will be missed, but we want to wish her all the best in the future!

2005-2007 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM (CDP)

CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses in 2005, 2006, and 2007 for **crops planted or prevented from being planted before February 28, 2007**. Losses must be from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 and 2007 will receive payment for the one year in which the benefit is the highest.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

A producer may be eligible for CDP if the crop losses resulted from any of the following:

- damaging weather, such as drought, excessive moisture, hail, freeze, tornado;
- An adverse natural occurrence, such as earthquake or flood; or
- A condition related to damaging weather or an adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive wind, excessive heat, disease or insect infestation.

To receive CDP benefits for quantity losses, the FSA county committee must determine that, because of eligible damaging weather, the producer:

- was prevented from planting a crop;
- sustained a loss in excess of 35 percent of the expected production of a crop; or sustained a loss in excess of 35 percent of the value for value-loss crops.

In determining production, participants must supply verifiable and reliable production records to substantiate production to the FSA county committee. FSA uses RMA (crop insurance) loss records for insured crops where available and determined to be accurate.

FSA includes all harvested production, non-harvested appraised production, and assigned production for the total planted acreage of the crop unit to determine production under CDP.

The maximum CDP benefits a person may receive is \$80,000. Producers eligible for CDP can also receive benefits under the 2005 - 2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP).

A participant may receive benefits for crop losses for only one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 crop years.

The sum of the value of the crop not lost (if any), the CDP payment received and any crop insurance payment or payments received under NAP for losses to the same crop cannot exceed 95 percent of what the crop's value would have been if there had been no loss.

Signup for the 2005-2007 CDP quantity losses began October 15, 2007. No final signup date has been announced. Signup for CDP quality losses has not been announced. **Please contact the office to schedule an appointment to make a CDP application for quantity losses.**

2008 County Committee Election

The Branch County Committee election began November 2nd and will end December 3rd for Sherwood, Union, Matteson, Bronson, and Noble Townships.



VOTE and make a difference. Prospective Voter Requirements:

Anyone in LAA #1, who meets the requirements in 1 or 2, plus 3, below, is eligible to vote:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either of the following:
 - an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper, or
 - a partner in a general partnership or member of a joint venture that has an interest in a farm as an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper; or
2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm; and
3. Eligible to participate in any FSA program that is provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

Discrimination Prohibited: No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR BALLOT BY DECEMBER 3, 2007.

Seeking Nomination for County Committee Advisor

The Branch County Committee is seeking candidates interested in serving as a County Committee Advisor. Advisors serve as a voice for socially disadvantaged farmers to ensure fair representation.

COC advisors are responsible for increasing awareness of and participation in FSA activities by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions.

The appointment is for a 12 month period effective March 1 of each year.

Interested persons should submit a short narrative about themselves to the FSA office by **December 14, 2007.**

Livestock Compensation Program (LCP)

The Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) is part of the disaster legislation. LCP compensates producers for feed losses resulting from natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007. Producers must choose only one year to receive benefits. This summer's drought is not covered under this legislation.

Eligible Livestock are dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation.

Eligible Producers must have owned or leased eligible livestock on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period.

Producers must choose payment for only one year 2005, 2006, or 2007. Applications will be taken by appointment only.

Wool and Mohair LDP's

The 2007 crop year for wool and mohair began January 1st. Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments (LDP's) are available for 2007 wool and mohair thru January 31, 2008.

Make sure you have a CCC-633EZ on file before you lose beneficial interest in your 2007 wool or mohair. You can obtain this form online or from our office.

Emergency (EM) Loans Available

Effective November 7, 2007, the entire State of Michigan counties were designated as natural disaster areas where eligible family farmers may qualify for Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans due to losses caused by drought that occurred in 2007.

Emergency loan applications will be received through July 7, 2008 for physical and production losses.

Branch County also has a disaster designation for hail received July 26, 2007. Eligible producers have until June 5, 2008 to apply for the EM loans to help cover part of their losses.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Aerial photos of each tract of land are being mailed out to Branch County operators and owners for their review. Please review these aerial photos carefully because this will be the acreage used for your farming operation in the future. **If corrections are needed, please contact the office for an appointment to review all map lines. Much work behind the scenes still needs to be completed so appointments are a must.**

Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP)

Commodity loans and LDP's are available WITHOUT participation in the 2007 DCP program; however, crops must be reported.

Nine-month loans are available when crops are harvested. There are two types of loans, farm-stored and warehouse-stored. The loan rate is the rate for the county where the grain is stored. The producer must maintain beneficial interest in the grain under loan.

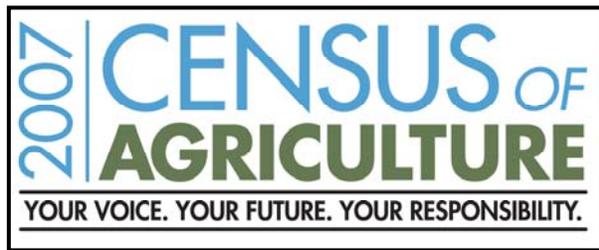
- Marketing assistance loans and LDP's are available for wool and mohair through January 31, wheat and honey through March 31, and May 31 for corn and soybeans.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If sales proceeds are needed to repay the loan, you MUST request a CCC-681-1, Marketing Authorization, to move your grain.

Market Loan Repayments are an option that allows you to use cash to repay a commodity loan at the lesser of the posted county price (PCP) or principal plus interest

Employment Opportunity

The Branch County FSA Office is taking applications for a potential permanent program technician position. If you are interested, you must submit an application on form FSA-675 along with KSA's (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities). A resume is not sufficient. FSA-675 is available online or at the county office.



The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your chance to share your voice. Your response provides vital information that impacts decisions about community development, funding availability, farm policy and other key issues. Look for the Census in your mailbox in early January 2008. Complete and return the form by February 4, 2008.

Have a Happy Holiday Season !



Marlene's Retirement Open House

This will be my last newsletter as CED in Branch County. I will be retiring effective January 3, 2008. The staff has planned a retirement open house in my honor on December 20, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Stop by to say hello and farewell.

I have been with the agency 27 + years and in Branch County for 14 years. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve the producers in Branch County. I'm looking forward to another phase in my life and traveling with my husband.

I want to say a special **THANK YOU** to the Staff and County Committee. They are absolutely "Top Notch" and I will miss them. They work so hard for all of you!!

Marlene Marshall, CED

eGov Customer Registration Process

1. The first step is to obtain your "Level 2 Authorization" by accessing your website of interest:
 - USDA Customer Statement <http://customerstatement.usda.gov>
 - Electronic LDP Signup http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm
2. Create an online user profile and apply for Level 2 access
3. Respond to the verification email within 7 days of receipt.
4. Visit the County Office in person and provide photo identification to the Local Registration Authority in order to receive Level 2 Activation.
5. You will have access to Level 2 applications within one hour after your profile has been activated.



USDA Nondiscrimination Statement - 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) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, visually impaired or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodation is required, contact Marlene Marshall, County Executive Director, at (517) 278-2725 ext. 2.