



February 2007

# Calhoun County News

**Calhoun County FSA  
USDA Service Center**  
13464 Preston Dr. Suite 100  
Marshall, MI 49068  
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269-781-3199 (fax)

**Web Sites**  
www.fsa.usda.gov/  
**FSA Forms**  
http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov

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

**County Committee**  
David Bosserd, Chairperson  
Keith Lawrence, Vice-Chair  
Carleton Irving, Member  
Rita Reincke, Advisor

**Staff**  
Kim Bates, Program Tech.  
Bonnie Baxter, PT  
Georgann Detty, PT  
Ellen Kiessling, PT  
Rose Hoffman, PT  
Jerry Motz, Field Asst.  
Phill DeYoung, FLM  
Elizabeth Lake, CED

## Dates to Remember

**Feb. 19-** President's Day, office closed.

**Mar. 6 -** Sprayer Clinic

**Mar. 13-** eGov Meeting

**Mar. 15-** Deadline to purchase NAP for spring-seeded annual crops.

**Mar. 31** -Deadline to request '06-crop barley, honey, oat, and wheat loans & LDP's

## DCP Sign Up Underway

The **annual** sign up for the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical program continues through **June 1, 2007. APPOINTMENTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED.** After June 1st, there is a \$100 late fee per farm.

## Fruit and Vegetable Planting

Producers may plant any crop on base acres enrolled in DCP, except fruits and vegetables (FAV). However, producers may plant fruits and vegetables on base acres enrolled in DCP if the **farm** has a history of planting FAV in at least one of the crop years 1998 through 2001, or if the **producer** has a history of planting the specific commodity. In either case the DCP payments will be reduced an acre for each acre of base acreage planted to the FAV. If neither the farm nor the producer has a FAV history, fruits and vegetables can be planted on acres in excess of the DCP base acres. For example, if a farm has 300 acres of cropland with 200 acres of DCP corn base any FAV could be planted on the 100 non-base acres. The DCP payments would be unaffected.

## eGov Meeting Scheduled March 13th

You've read about eGov in the newsletters, now come see what it can do for you now and what it will be able to do for you in the future.

Two sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> session is from 8 to 11 a.m. The 2<sup>nd</sup> session is from 1 to 4 p.m. Space is limited so call the Calhoun FSA office at (269) 781-4263 ext 2 to reserve a seat and computer in one of the sessions. Yes, that's right **computer!** This will be a hands on demonstration. If you don't already have your eGov Level 2 Authorization you'll get it during the training. Some of the topics that will be covered during the sessions are:

- View aerial photography on your computer;
- e-filing DCP, LDP and Forms;
- Financial Services - view payments and receivables on your computer;
- Web Soil Survey - web application that provides electronic access to relevant soil and related information needed to make management decisions about the land.

Both of these sessions will be held in the conference room at the USDA Service Center.

## FSA Committee Election Results

David Bosserd, of Marshall Township, was elected to the Calhoun County FSA Committee for his second, three year term. Dave represents Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1, which covers Bedford, City of Battle Creek, Convis, Emmett, Lee, Marshall and Pennfield townships. Dave's term began on January 1, 2007. Sharon Williams, of Lee Township, was also elected to serve as the first alternate to LAA 1.

## '07 County Committee Meeting Dates

For 2007 the regularly scheduled meeting date for the Calhoun County FSA Committee is the third Tuesday of each month. This date is subject to change. Meetings convene at 8:30 a.m. and are open to the public.

## NAP Deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>

March 15, 2007 is the final date to apply for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on spring-seeded annual crops. This includes, but is not limited to most fruits and vegetables.

## Wool and Mohair Deadlines

Before you lose control (beneficial interest) of your 2007 wool, mohair, or unshorn pelts make sure you have the proper form on file with this office. The proper form for 2007 is the CCC-633EZ page 1.



## Sprayer Clinic March 6<sup>th</sup>

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program will be hosting a regional sprayer clinic/MAEAP phase one meeting on Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln Farms located at 9221 N. Parma Rd. Springport. Lunch will be provided for a small \$5.00 fee. Restricted use pesticide credits are available. Contact the Calhoun Conservation District for times and details at (269) 781-4867 ext. 5.



## 2007 Farm Bill Proposals

The Administration's 2007 farm bill proposals represent a reform-minded and fiscally responsible approach to supporting America's farmers and ranchers. While the current law has served its purpose, the time has come to move forward with a farm program that is market-oriented and considers more than commodity prices alone when determining the appropriate level of government support. The proposals continue this Administration's commitment to increase conservation programs that protect our natural resources and focus support on renewable energy that will help to lead us to the President's goal of reducing annual gasoline use by 20 percent in ten years.

The Administration's Proposals Reform Commodity Payment Programs By:

- **Converting The Current Price-Based Countercyclical Program To A Revenue-Based Program That Is Responsive To Actual Conditions And Provides A Strong Safety Net.** Under a price-based program, farmers who experience crop loss are often under-compensated while those with high production tend to be over-compensated. This new revenue program will factor in U.S. crop yield when determining crop payments to better target support.
- **Reforming And Modernizing The Marketing Assistance Loan Program For Program Commodities.** The current law provides loan rates or price floors for corn, wheat, cotton, rice, soybeans, and other major crops. These price floors are set in law at high levels which have encouraged production and resulted in lower market prices. The proposals set loan rates for each commodity at 85 percent of the 5-year Olympic average (average of last five years excluding the high and low year). This change minimizes market distortions and encourages farmers to plant crops based on market prices instead of the level of subsidy payment.
- **Tightening Payment Limits And Working To Close Payment Loopholes.** Under current law, farmers use the three-entity rule to establish corporations and other entities, which allow the amount of payments received to exceed statutory limits. These proposals eliminate the three-entity rule and tie payments to an individual. This plan also sets the subsidy payment limit for individuals at a total of \$360,000.

To receive commodity payments, producers must also meet a limit on Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), which includes wages and other income minus farm expenses and depreciation. This plan reduces the AGI limit of \$2.5 million to a new limit of \$200,000. If a producer has an annual adjusted gross income of \$200,000 or more, that individual would no longer be eligible for commodity payments. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data for 2004 indicate that 97.7 percent of all American tax filers have an AGI under \$200,000.

**The Administration's Proposals Include An Additional \$7.8 Billion To Protect Our Natural Resources Through Conservation Programs By:**

- **Increasing The Acreage Limit On The Wetlands Reserve Program From 2.3 to 3.5 million acres.** With this increase to the acreage cap, a total of 250,000 acres will be made available for enrollment annually.
- **Consolidating Cost-Share Programs Into The Environmental Quality Incentives Program And Creating A Regional Water Enhancement Program With An Additional \$4.2 Billion In Funding.** This newly designed EQIP program will increase the simplicity and accessibility of conservation programs and provide program flexibility that increases environmental benefits. The new water program will focus on cooperative approaches to enhancing water quality on a regional scale. This program will fill a void in the Federal government's conservation delivery system by facilitating a cost-share program to coordinate large-scale water conservation projects.

- **Continuing The Conservation Reserve Program At The Current Acreage Limit And Focusing Program Benefits On Lands That Provide The Greatest Environmental Benefit.** This plan also gives priority to whole-field enrollment for lands utilized for biomass production for energy.

The Administration's Farm Bill Proposals Include More Than \$1.6 Billion In New Renewable Energy Funding And Targets Programs To Cellulosic Ethanol Projects. These Proposals Advance Renewable Energy And Build Upon Farm Bill Energy Programs By:

- **Providing \$500 Million For A Bioenergy and Biobased Product Research Initiative.** Advances in technology play an important role in the future of renewable energy. Our scientists, farmers and entrepreneurs must coordinate efforts to continue improvements in crop yields and work to reduce the cost of producing alternative fuels.
- **Providing \$500 Million For Renewable Energy Systems And Efficiency Improvements Grants Program.** This program supports small alternative energy and energy efficiency projects that directly help farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses.
- **Providing \$210 Million To Support An Estimated \$2.1 Billion In Loan Guarantees For Cellulosic Ethanol Projects In Rural Areas.** This program will advance the development of cellulosic ethanol production.

**The Administration's Farm Bill Proposals Continue This Administration's Commitment To Rural America By Building Upon U.S. Department Of Agriculture Rural Development Programs.** The plan includes \$1.6 billion in guaranteed loans to complete the rehabilitation of more than 1,200 current Rural Critical Access Hospitals. It also includes \$500 million to reduce the backlog of rural infrastructure projects such as water and waste disposal loans and grants.

The Proposals Target Nearly \$5 Billion To Significantly Increase Support Of Fruit and Vegetable Producers Through Targeted Programs and by:

- **Providing \$1 Billion For Research Programs Targeted To Specialty Crops.** This initiative will include fundamental work in plant breeding, genetics and genomics to improve crop characteristics such as product appearance, environmental responses and tolerances, nutrient management and pest management.
- **Providing \$3.2 Billion to Improve Nutrition Assistance Programs By Purchasing More Fruits And Vegetables.** This funding will support efforts by schools and other participants to offer meals based on the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans by increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables to students participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and to participants in other nutrition assistance programs.

**The Administration's Farm Bill Proposals Increase Trade Programs By Nearly \$400 Million To Continue The Creation, Expansion and Maintenance Of Agricultural Exports By:**

- **Increasing the Market Access Program by \$250 Million.** This initiative allows partnerships between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and non-profit domestic agricultural trade associations to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities such as consumer promotions and market research.



The 2007 farm bill proposals spend approximately \$10 billion less than the cost of the 2002 farm bill over the past five years (excluding ad-hoc disaster aid) and uphold the President's plan to eliminate the deficit in five years. These proposals authorize approximately \$5 billion more than the projected spending if the 2002 farm bill were extended. Additional information can be found at: [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/\\_s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?navid=FARM\\_BILL\\_FORUMS](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?navid=FARM_BILL_FORUMS).

## Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

- Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas?
- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
- Is there a wet spot in a field that you want to drain to make cropping easier?
- Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?

These are Highly Erodible and Wetland (Sod/Swamp) provision questions that need to be considered by producers to assure they remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any questions or concerns that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your FSA or NRCS representatives before you begin work.

## Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be electronically transferred into your bank account, unless you have a legitimate hardship reason for still receiving your payments by check. You need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments will be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.



**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 or 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 Elizabeth Lake, County Executive Director, at (269) 781-4263 ext. 2.