



Cass Farm Service Agency NEWSLETTER

Cass County FSA
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County Committee
Michael Gordon
David Grabemeyer
Brad Barnett
Patrick Duff

Staff
Marcia J Collins, CED
Kay Strom, PT
Barbara Steensma, PT
Judi Kidman, PT
Zelda Cloud, PT
John Green, FA
Robert Dohm, FA
Richard Swartz, FA

2005-2007 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM (CDP)

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



benefits.

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

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) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

A participant may receive benefits for crop losses for only one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 crop years. Payments will be made not later than 60 days after a producer files completed applications necessary for FSA to determine producer eligibility for benefits.



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 is expected to start in January. *Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.*

2005-2007 LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM (LCP)

LCP provides benefits to livestock producers who suffered feed losses or incurred additional feed costs directly resulting from natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, including losses because of blizzards that started in 2006 and continued into January 2007.

FSA Website
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

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





Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas or counties declared presidential disaster areas between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, are eligible. Also, producers in primary counties (and contiguous counties) that received an approved Administrator's Physical Loss Notification (APLN), when the APLN is directly associated to a natural disaster designated by President Bush, are eligible.

To be eligible under LCP, livestock must be dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, swine, goats or deer that:

- have been physically located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period;
- have been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation on the beginning date of the disaster period; and
- have not been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. Such excluded uses include, but are not limited to, wild free roaming animals or animals used for recreational purposes such as pleasure, hunting, pets, roping or for show.

Eligible producers must have either owned or cash-leased eligible livestock (but not both for the same livestock) on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period and must be a citizen of, or legal resident alien in, the United States. They also must have suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of eligible disaster events during the applicable disaster periods. The feed lost or additional incurred feed costs must have been intended for use with eligible livestock.



FSA will calculate LCP payments by multiplying the national payment rate for each livestock category by the number of eligible livestock in each category. The national payment rate represents 61% of the cost for corn needed to maintain the specific livestock for 30 days, as determined by FSA. Producers may receive no more than \$80,000 under LCP. An individual or entity whose average adjusted gross income exceeds \$2.5 million for the three years immediately preceding the calendar year for which benefits are requested is ineligible for LCP benefits unless 75% or more of their income is from agriculture.

In addition to a completed application filed during the application period, livestock producers applying for LCP must submit adequate proof that the feed loss or incurred additional feed costs:

- were for the claimed eligible livestock;
- occurred as a direct result of an eligible disaster event during an eligible disaster period in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested;
- other supporting documentation necessary to determine the applicant's eligibility. Supporting documents may include, but are not limited to, verifiable purchase records, veterinarian records, bank of other loan papers, rendering truck receipts, FEMA records, National Guard records, written contracts, production records, IRS records, property tax records, private insurance documents, sales records or similar documents.

Signup for the 2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program began September 10, 2007. No final signup date has been announced. ***Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.***

2007 ELECTIONS

Eligible Voters in LAA 2, which includes Silver Creek, Wayne, Pokagon, Howard and Milton Townships, should have received their ballots for the election. Please follow the directions on the ballots and return them to our office. They must be postmarked or returned to our office no later than December 3, 2007. David Grabemeyer and Michael Studer are the candidates for this three year term that begins January 1, 2008.



ADVISOR NOMINATIONS

The Cass County COC is now accepting nominations for the COC Advisor position. As a non-voting member of the COC, the Advisor ensures that all minority producers are treated fairly and the same as all other producers. Anyone who is interested in the position may be nominated by a minority group or themselves. Please send our office the nomination and a biography of the person by January 15, 2008. This is a one year term that is appointed by the State Committee with a recommendation from the COC, beginning March 1, 2008. Our current advisor, Patrick Duff, has reached the term limits and is not eligible this year. Thank you Pat, for your hard work for the county's minority farmers.

USDA eGOV Initiative

The USDA's eGOV Initiative enables applicants to register online, find forms and complete applications via the internet. You will also find information about farm programs and farm loan programs. We encourage you to register online at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

2007-CROP COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. The current interest rate is 6.000% and the loan rates are as follows:

<i>County</i>	<i>Soft Red Wheat</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Soybeans</i>
Cass	\$2.57/bu	\$1.34/bu	\$1.96/bu	\$5.01/bu

MARKETING GAINS

Beginning with the 2007 calendar year, FSA/CCC will report producer market gains associated with the repayment of a CCC loan, whether the producer repays the loan with cash or uses commodity certificates in exchange of the outstanding loan collateral. The market gain will be reported on IRS form 1099-G.

SHE'S LEAVING US

After 24+ years of working for FSA/CFSA/ASCS, Barbara Steensma is retiring December 31, 2007. Barb started as a temporary employee who would work during heavy workload periods and became a program technician in March 1984. Barb handles commodity loans and NAP, and has done eligibility and different dairy programs over the years. She plans to travel more (like she doesn't travel enough now) and spend more time with her family. We have watched her sons, Aaron and Nathan, grow up, get married and start families of their own, so Barb now has four grandchildren, Caleb, Caitlyn, Kendrick and Allison.

It will be with heavy hearts that we say good-bye to Barb with an Open House on December 27, 2007 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Cass County FSA Office. Please stop by to wish her luck in retirement.



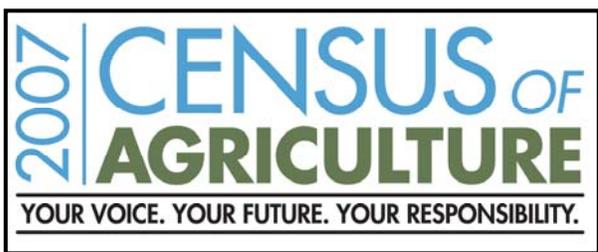
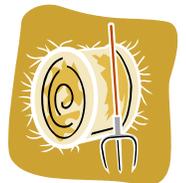
Attention Producers, Landowners!

- 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 drain to make cropping easier?
- Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
- Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?

These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any question or concern that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative before you begin work.

*** DID YOU KNOW? ***

Alfalfa is supposedly the oldest known plant used for livestock feed. Records of its use date as early as 1,000 BC in the Middle East. Alfalfa is very drought resistant and one of the most nutritious crops to feed to animals. Alfalfa sprouts are used in salads, and the leaves may also be used raw or cooked as a vegetable.



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.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 CASS FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 11127 E STATE STREET
 CASSOPOLIS, MICHIGAN 49031

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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.

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

- November 22 Thanksgiving Day Holiday – Offices Closed
- December 3 Last Day to Return Voted Ballots for County Committee Election
- December 6 Election Ballots Counted
- December 25 Christmas Day Holiday – Offices Closed
- December 27 Barb Steensma’s Open House
- January 1, 2008 New Year’s Day Holiday – Offices Closed
- January 16 County Committee Meeting
- January 21 Martin Luther King Jr’s Birthday Holiday – Offices Closed
- January 31 Deadline to Request 2007-Crop Wool and Mohair Loans & LDPs
- Ongoing Farm Storage Facility Loans



SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact their local County Office in person or by phone.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program 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 Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.