

ELLSWORTH COUNTY FSA NEWS

May 2009

Ellsworth County FSA Office

402 W 15th St., Suite 2
Ellsworth, KS 67439-1623
Phone: (785) 472-3161
Fax: (785) 472-5248



County Committee Members

Frank Toman, Chairperson
Lucas Janzen, Vice Chairperson
Dan Johnson, Member
Karen Grothusen, Advisor

www.fsa.usda.gov/ks

*The Committee meets the 1st Wednesday of each month
8:00 a.m.*

Office Staff

Michael Martin Carmen Homeier Joan Weinhold Alice Soukup Linda Davis

Hours: Monday - Friday, 7:00 am - 4:30 pm

2009 DCP signup extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) continues until **AUGUST 14, 2009**. This deadline is an extension from the original deadline of June 1, 2009. There are no late filed provisions for DCP.

FSA computes DCP program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payments for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

Producers eligible for the DCP Program are also eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. See below for additional information regarding the ACRE program.

ACRE program information

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill that begins in crop year 2009. Through ACRE, FSA offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

ACRE payments are made when both state-level and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. A decision to elect ACRE binds the farm to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Farm Bill. ACRE election sign up started April 27, 2009 and continues through **August 14, 2009**.

Acreage certification

Producers must report acreages by applicable deadlines to maintain eligibility for most FSA programs. All cropland on the farm must be certified on FSA-578 to remain eligible. All farmland, including hay and grazing land must be certified to remain eligible for disaster programs. Small grain certification deadline is **June 1, 2009**. If you fail to timely certify your small grains, you may late-file your certification for a fee of at least \$46 per farm.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, contact the FSA office - Phone: 785-472-3161, ext. 2.

Timely Filing of Loss

Form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed with 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

2009 County Committee Election Period

June 15, 2009 marks the beginning of the nomination period for the upcoming Ellsworth County FSA Committee position currently held by Lucas Janzen. The 2009 election will cover Local Administrative Area 2 (LAA#2) which consists of Garfield, Mulberry, Ellsworth, Clear Creek, Carneiro, West Empire, East Empire, Trivoli, and Langley townships. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else to serve on the County Committee for a three year term, stop by the office and pick form FSA-669A to nominate the person of your choice.

Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program

Currently, the FSFL program offers seven-year low-interest (May rate is 2.375 percent) loans to help build or upgrade/increase grain storage facilities. For qualified applicants, loan principal is 85 percent of the net cost of the new storage facility and/or associated equipment, not to exceed \$100,000 for each borrower. The interest rate is fixed for the term of the loan, based on the month of loan approval.

Facilities must be needed to store wheat, oats, barley, grain sorghum, corn, soybeans and sunflowers, or other approved commodities. The structures must be permanently affixed, and may include (but are not limited to) conventional bins, oxygen-limiting or other upright silo-type structures, and flat-type storage structures designed for whole grain storage. Related equipment may include perforated floors, safety equipment, electrical equipment, and concrete components essential for a fully functional storage facility.

Sodbuster, Swampbuster provisions

Most FSA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility, it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting this type of work.

CRP haying and grazing

Certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts are required to conduct a management practice in 2009. A majority of contract holders who are required to conduct a management practice this year elected to either hay or graze the acres. There are forms that are required to be signed before haying or grazing can take place. The forms are available in our office after July 1. Haying activity can take place between July 16 and August 15 only. Grazing activity can take place during July 16 and November 13, not to exceed 120 consecutive days or otherwise limited by forage conditions. If you think you may have a required management practice to perform on your CRP acres, or you want to know if your CRP acres are eligible for haying and grazing in 2009, contact our office.

Continuous CRP Available

Numerous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, encompassing over 2 million acres in Kansas will expire between 2009 and 2013. Many contract holders may choose to return their acres back to crop production or grazing land.

To maintain the conservation benefits achieved in the CRP, FSA encourages producers to consider keeping some or all of their environmentally sensitive acreage under contract. While re-enrollment options under general signup are limited, landowners may enroll their environmentally sensitive acres in continuous CRP signup at any time.

Continuous CRP continued...

Continuous CRP practices include riparian forest buffers, filter strips, grass waterways, and wildlife habitat buffers, which provide important environmental benefits, such as improving water quality, reducing soil erosion, and enhancing wildlife habitat. FSA accepts continuous CRP signup contracts automatically, provided landowners meet eligibility requirements. Continuous CRP contracts are 10-15 years long and pay an enhanced rental rate.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Adding Pulse Crop base acres

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) provided that eligible pulse crop base acres may be added to a farm. The addition of pulse crop base acres is effective for 2009 through 2012 and required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill. Pulse crops are defined as dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umatilla, and wrinkled), lentils, large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans) and small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans). Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical payments or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments. Direct payments will not be eligible. Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001 may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required: Late-filed prevented planting provisions for 1998 through 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Wishing everyone a safe spring planting and summer harvest season!