



August 2007

Genesee/Shiawassee *FSA News*

USDA Service Center
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Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

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Genesee Committee
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Monday – Friday
8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Staff
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Shiawassee Committee
Nicholas A. Zdunic
John T. Stasa
George Zmitko I
Julia Birchmeier – Advisor

Field Assistant
William Darnell

Farm Loan Manager
David Hemker
Phil Sweeney

County Director
Jayne A. Van Ness

Meet the Candidates

The upcoming County Committee elections are underway and candidates have been nominated from the areas holding the elections. Those areas and candidates are:

Genesee County
Local Administrative Area #1
Townships of: Clayton, Flushing,
Montrose, Mt. Morris and Vienna

Candidates:

Ronald Dieck - Ronald (Ron) Dieck farms in the Clayton Township area. His primary crops are corn and soybeans.

Linda Minarik - Linda farms with her husband William Minarik from the Flushing area. Their primary crops are corn, soybeans, wheat and dry beans.

Shiawassee County
Local Administrative Area #1
Townships of: Fairfield,
Middlebury, Owosso, Perry,
Sciota and Woodhull

Candidates:

Lynn Garber - Lynn farms in the Owosso area. His primary crops are corn, soybeans and wheat.

Donald Stevens - Donald farms in the Owosso area. His farm is enrolled into the Conservation Program.

George Zmitko I - George farms with his wife Kathleen Zmitko in the Owosso area. Their primary crops are corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, oats, barley and red clover.

Calendar of election activity:

- **August 6, 2007**
County offices completed review of candidates eligibility.
- **November 2, 2007**
Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters in the election area.
- **November 19, 2007**
Reminder postcards will be mailed.
- **December 3, 2007**
Final date for ballots to be returned.
- **December 5, 2007**
Shiawassee County will count ballots.
- **December 6, 2007**
Genesee County will count ballots.

DISASTER CONDITIONS

In the event of a disaster condition affecting your farm, **PLEASE** remember that you must report the event causing any loss or damage to crop acreages or farm structures within 15 days from the date of the occurrence. This allows FSA to verify the conditions in the field timely for future disaster reports, crop insurance requests and/or potential disaster programs.

USDA GRANTS AVAILABLE

A couple different USDA grants are available for the following:

- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program Grants
Contact Rural Development, Caro Office at (989) 673-7588.
- Assist Farmers with Disabilities
<http://www.csrees.usda>



CONSERVATION TODAY

Farm Service Agency • Natural Resources Conservation Service • Conservation District

CREP Financial Benefits Increase

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is open for enrollment as anticipation of the environmental and financial benefits continue. CREP was created to address the environmental issues of soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat. CREP targets sensitive areas in the Saginaw Bay Watershed by giving landowners financial incentives to establish conservation practices such as filter strips, riparian buffers, field windbreaks, wetland restorations and grass plantings.

Qualifying individuals receive annual payments based on 140% of their soil rental rate, 100% cost share assistance to establish the conservation practice, an annual maintenance payment, as well as several other lucrative financial incentives. **The Michigan State Farm Service Agency has just announced the Shiawassee and Genesee Counties Soil Rental Rates have increased as much as \$10 - \$17 an acre!**

For additional information regarding this program as well as other conservation programs administered through USDA, please contact your local Farm Service Agency, NRCS, or Conservation District Office at the following numbers:

- Shiawassee, FSA (989) 723-8263, Ext. 2
- Shiawassee, NRCS (989) 723-8263, Ext. 3
- Genesee, FSA (810) 230-8766, Ext. 2

CLEAN SWEEP COLLECTION

Dispose of Unused, Unusable & Unwanted Pesticides

The Shiawassee/Genesee Groundwater Stewardship Program will be hosting a Clean Sweep Collection on **Friday September 21, 2007** at the Venice Township Hall, 906 S. New Lothrop Road, Lennon, from 9 am to 12 pm. Only pesticides and mercury will be accepted at this collection.

Clean Sweep is a voluntary program designed to dispose of unused and unwanted pesticides properly. This service is free to farmers and individuals. Pesticide dealers and sellers may also dispose of pesticides at this collection, at a cost that is much lower than normal average commercial costs. The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, Environmental Protection Agency and local agencies pay for the disposal of these pesticides. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality provides support that allows mercury disposal at a collection.

To participate please contact the Shiawassee Conservation District; 989-723-8263 x3 to schedule an appointment. If the containers are ripped or open and not safe to handle, arrangements can be made to have them picked up at your location. Safety is extremely important to you and the program.

For additional information contact Tom Wert, Groundwater Technician, at the Shiawassee Conservation District, 989-723-8263 x3.

Assistance Provided for a Manure/Nutrient Management Plan

A Manure/Nutrient Plan also known as a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), is a plan that describes a farm's production practices, conservation practices used and needed, management activities, animal production operations and utilization of animal manure.

A CNMP will help farms comply with the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) developed under the Michigan Right-to-Farm Act. Other reasons for developing and implementing a CNMP include protecting water quality and gaining useful and economical benefit from animal manure.

Included in a CNMP is a map of the existing farm area, a basic description of the farm with goals, type and number of animals and bedding used.

The farm's manure management is included with the amount of manure produced annually on the farm as well as the nutrients available in the manure. Topics addressed include manure hauling, spreading methods, manure storage, acres planted, yields, nutrient removal crop charts, fertilizer practices, and dead animal removal.

If you would like assistance in developing a CNMP, please contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service office at (989) 723-8263 x3.

Conservation Organizations Launch the Michigan Conservation Climate Initiative

Over the last few years, the debate over global warming has shifted from scientific circles to mainstream America. Of particular interest to the agricultural community in Michigan is how certain conservation practices sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide - the primary greenhouse gas behind global warming – and create revenue for farmers and landowners.

To help Michigan farmers and landowners generate revenue from the emerging carbon market, the Delta Institute and the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts have collaborated to form the Michigan Conservation and Climate Initiative. Known as MCCI, this initiative provides a framework for farmers and landowners to enroll their lands and earn carbon-offset credits for implementing certain conservation practices that improve carbon sequestration on their land. Landowners then sell their carbon-offset credits on the Chicago Climate Exchange, a voluntary, member-based market comprised of large companies, municipalities and institutions, including Ford, Dow and Michigan State University. At current market prices, a landowner can typically earn between \$2 and \$12 per acre, depending on the conservation practice, from the sale of carbon-offset credits.

To earn carbon-offset credits, a landowner must enroll their land with a Chicago Climate Exchange Registered Aggregator, such as the Delta Institute, and implement one or more of the following conservation practices: conservation tillage, also known as no-till or strip till agriculture; grass or tree plantings; methane capture through the use of an anaerobic manure digester. There is no cost to enroll, but landowners must sign a contract and commit to maintain the conservation practice through 2010.

One of the strengths of this initiative is the partnership with the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts. The 79 Michigan Conservation Districts throughout the state will be providing landowners with project information, enrollment assistance, and verification services. Landowners can earn revenue from this program while still utilizing government cost share programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

To learn more about the Michigan Conservation and Climate Initiative attend the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program field day and pig roast lunch on August 16, 2007 where a representative from Delta Institute will be a featured speaker. Please call the Shiawassee Conservation District office for details (989) 723-8263 x3.

Why Do You Need an Agrichemical Containment Facility (ACF)?

On **August 13, 2008** it is going to become law that you must have secondary containment for bulk fertilizer in a single container that has a capacity of more than 2,500 gallons or a combined total capacity for all storage containers or tanks located at a single site or location greater than 7,500 gallons.

An Agrichemical Containment Facility (ACF) is an impermeable barrier and containment placed or constructed on the ground where agrichemical storage, loading, mixing, and clean-up occur. The purpose of an ACF is to prevent degradation of surface water, groundwater, and soil from an unintentional release of agrichemicals. Unintentional releases of agrichemicals may occur through spills, leaks, or rinsing operations during storage, loading, mixing, and cleanup.

You can currently sign-up for money or cost share for non-commercial operations as follows through the NRCS office:

- \$2,600 to \$3,200 -- Operational Mix/Load Pad only
- \$5,850 to \$7,200 -- Bulk Fertilizer Secondary Containment with operational area
- \$17,225 to \$21,200 -- Permanent Pesticide Storage w/ mix load area, storage & building
- \$19,500 to \$24,000 -- Permanent Pesticide Storage w/ mix load area, storage, building & bulk fertilizer secondary containment in same building

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

The continuous conservation reserve program is available throughout the whole counties of both Genesee and Shiawassee. Eligibility criteria is similar to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), however the additional funding issued through the Michigan Department of Agriculture is not available under this program. This program still provides up to an annual payment of 120% of your soil rental rate, up to 90% cost share to establish the conservation practice, an annual maintenance payment, as well as several other lucrative financial incentives (Note: Soil Rental Rates were recently increased for most Michigan Counties).

Certain eligibility requirements must be met to qualify for this program. Please contact Farm Service Agency for additional information.

Facility Loan Program

Individuals who wish to purchase new farm storage, drying and/or grain handling equipment may apply for the facility loan program. The process is as follows:

- Producer contacts their local FSA office and provides them with original quotes for all equipment, electrical and excavating needs. FSA will determine qualifying needs and the producer will pay a \$45.00 application fee.
- Form FSA-185, application will be completed, signed and initialed by the individual. The producer will also sign a request for a "Credit Report" for financial purposes.
- The county office will set up an appointment for the producer to meet with the Farm Loan Manager responsible for that county office once the credit report is received to prepare a "Financial Analysis" for the county committee.
- The CED will visit the farm where the bin structure and/or equipment will be placed to conduct an "Environmental Analysis".
- The application is completed and prepared to be presented to the County Committee. The producer will be notified of the interest rate locked in and the amount of funding approved. (The funding amount will be 85% of the total cost of the structure. Funding is disbursed after the structure is completed).

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.

FSA's 2007 National Compliance and Spot Check Review,

FSA is committed to delivering accurate program payments to America's agricultural producers. The accuracy of payments not only benefits farmers and ranchers, but also maximizes taxpayer dollars and government efficiency.

As part of the 2007 National Compliance Review, FSA's national office is requiring local FSA county offices to conduct compliance reviews and spot checks of certain producers selected by the national office through a statistical sampling method. A statistical sample of FSA employees, County Committee (COC) and State Committee (STC) members have also been selected for review using this same process.

FSA may review a producer's operations in multiple states and counties, depending on the scope of the producer's operations. FSA will review both the accuracy of the representations made by the selected producers in connection with participation in FSA programs as well as the producer's compliance with applicable program requirements. The reviews may need to be conducted at various times throughout the year depending on the FSA programs in which the producer is participating. FSA appreciates the cooperation of its customers as the agency continues to enhance its operations.

FSA's goal is to ensure that program dollars are delivered effectively and efficiently so America's farmers and ranchers can provide safe and abundant food, fiber and fuel for consumers at home and abroad.