

THE

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Serving Farmers in the Grand Traverse Bay Area

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ISSUE 1

USDA SERVICE CENTER
GRAND TRAVERSE AREA
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231-941-0951 x 2
231-929-7890 (FAX)

Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 a.m.

Office & Field Staff

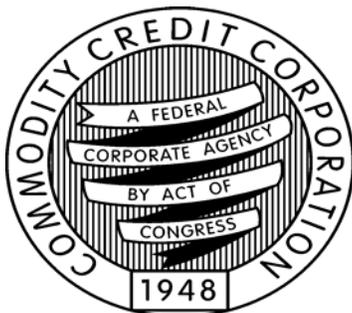
Greg Shy, CED
Julie Jimkoski
Stacey Stevens
Jan Malik

Farm Loan Staff

Jim Monroe, FLM
John Neff

County Committee

Greg Send, Chairman
Brent Wagner, V. Chairman
Chris Garthe, Member
Dennis Iott, Member
Dave Noonan, Member
Joanne Gallagher, Advisor



COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

Since the committee system was first established in 1936, Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees have provided an important voice in Federal decisions affecting their local communities. The County Committee (COC) oversees local FSA operations and makes critical decisions on how FSA commodity, conservation, and disaster programs are administered in its communities.

Our County Committee is composed of five members, each serving a 3-year term. One or two members are up for election annually. In addition to the elected members, the COC has one appointed, non-voting advisor to further represent the local interests of socially disadvantaged farmers.

This year we will be electing two new members to the COC. The nominees from LAA #3 (Acme, East Bay, Garfield, Long Lake, Peninsula, and Whitewater) are Joanne Gallagher and Greg Send. The nominees from LAA #5 (Kalkaska County) are Dennis Iott and Bruce Cotton.

Joanne Gallagher operates a dairy and fruit farm in Long Lake Township and Greg Send from Williamsburg is a cash crop producer and has a beef herd. Dennis Iott is a seed potato grower who operates in Oliver Twp. and Bruce Cotton fresh packs potatoes in Excelsior Twp.

Owners and operators of farming operations along with the spouse of farm owners are eligible to vote as long as the spouse is listed on the deed. If you farm in any of the named townships and would like to participate in the election, please contact the office for a ballot.

Ballots were mailed on November 3, 2007 and must be returned by December 3, 2007 in order to be counted.

Please vote in this very important election, every vote counts!



Final DCP Payments Issued

Producers who enrolled in the 2007 DCP program should have received their Final Direct payments. Those who received an advance DCP payment were paid the remaining balance of what was due. Counter Cyclical payments most likely will not be made due to high crop prices.

Commodity Loans and LDP's

Commodity loans for eligible commodities continue to be available. The loan rates for 2007 crops are as follows: Barley \$1.69, Corn \$1.79, Oats \$1.34, Soybeans \$4.86, Sunflowers \$8.30, and Wheat \$2.27. Commodity loans mature 9 months following the month of disbursement. The interest rate for November is 5.125%. Due to high commodity prices there are currently no crops eligible to receive LDP's.

GIS Mapping System

Aerial photos of each tract of land in Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau Counties have been sent out for your review. All producers were requested to review these maps and notify this office of corrections that needed to be made. Thank you for your quick response to the letters. This office has completed all the corrections that were reported to us, and is preparing to convert these new acreages so they will be available for use in the 2008 crop year. Much work behind the scenes still needs to be completed, however we are still planning on having this newer and more accurate information available for you.

Reporting Changes

It is important to remember to contact the office with any record changes that may have occurred. These changes would include, but are not limited to:

- Address – any contact information as well as temporary address changes should be updated for notification purposes.
- Direct Deposit – to ensure payments are deposited correctly, it is imperative that any changes in bank account information is updated immediately.
- Development – any new parcels of land removed for houses needs to be reported.
- Owner/Operator Changes – report any changes in land ownership, tenants or crop share arrangements.
- Reconstitutions – changes that requires farm combinations or separations due to sale of land or change in operators should be reported as soon as possible.
- Farm Operating Plan – any changes to the farming operation that may have an effect on “person” and/or “actively engaged” determinations.



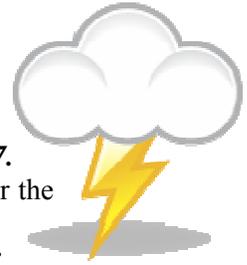
The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your chance to share your voice. Your response provides vital information that impacts decisions about community development, funding availability, farm policy and other key issues. Look for the Census in your mailbox in early January 2008. Complete and return it by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

Office Staffing Update

On Thursday October 25th Lori Kwasky retired from the FSA. Over the past 6 years Lori did an outstanding job providing service to the farmers in our counties. Her smiling face will be missed. Many of you have already met Julie Jimkoski. Julie has taken over the administration of programs Gloria Wilson formerly operated. Julie has enjoyed working with you over the past year and thanks you for your patience during the many changes our office is going through.

Crop Disaster Program (CDP) 2005-2007

CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions so long as ***the actual crop lost was planted or prevented from being planted prior to February 28, 2007.*** Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 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, or 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.

A participant may receive benefits for crop losses for only one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 crop years. Signup for the 2005-2007 CDP quantity losses began October 15, 2007. No final signup date has been announced. Signup for CDP quality losses will be announced at a future date. ***Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.***

Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) 2005-2006

Unlike the CDP program, you did not have to have insurance to apply for benefits under this program. Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas between Jan. 1, 2005 and Feb. 28, 2007 are eligible to apply. To be eligible under LCP, livestock must:

- Be dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer that;
- Have been physically located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period
- Not have been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation.
- Producers must have either owned or cash leased eligible livestock.
- ***Suffered a loss in pasture or grazing availability.***

Signup has started with no ending date announced. Contact the office prior to making your visit to apply and we will send you the LCP worksheet to aid you in gathering the required information to make application for benefit.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Program (NAP)

The final deadlines for 2008 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage are as follows: **November 20, 2007** for coverage on all perennial crops such as asparagus, strawberries, and ALL FRUIT. **December 1, 2007** for coverage on honey and maple sap. ***Any changes to crop acreage, such as removal of orchards or new plantings should also be reported at this time.*** Continuous coverage is available for all 2007 NAP Participants. If you were a NAP participant in 2007 and wish to cover the same crop(s) for 2008 it is possible to sign up without making a trip to the office. Just mail your payment in for the amount listed on your continuous coverage letter before the final application deadline and your crops will be covered for the 2008 crop year. For those wishing to enroll in the program, or those wishing to make changes to their crop coverage, please contact the office as soon as possible. Coverage is also available to producers of perennial crops that did not have coverage in 2007. The fee is \$100 per crop not to exceed \$300 per producer/per county. *Please note that the requirement of the current Crop Disaster Program is only available to producers that had NAP or RMA coverage on their crops.*

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

On Going Crop Disaster and Livestock Compensation Program

Nov. 5th -Election ballots should be received

Nov. 20th -Final day to purchase a NAP policy

Nov. 22nd -Office closed for Thanksgiving

Dec. 3rd -Final date to return election ballots

Dec. 6th -COC election (Ballot Counting, Public Welcome)

Dec. 25th -Office closed for Christmas

Jan. 1st -Newly elected COC members take office



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>

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone at (231) 941-0951 ext. 2.

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.