



Hillsdale County FSA News

Hillsdale County USDA Service Center

Hillsdale FSA

588 Olds St. Bldg 2
Jonesville, MI 49250
Phone 517 849-9890 X 2
FAX 517 849-9895

Hours

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

County Committee

Tom Schroeder, Chairman
Sheryl Kies, Vice-Chair
David Godfrey, Member

Commodity Staff

Candice Alexander, Farm
Records, Recons
Nina Draper, CRP
Cindy Gabbard, Price Sup
Angela Lanius, Crop Rept
Pattie Nichols, Adm
Shirley Shoemaker, DCP
Judy Hostetler, CED

Farm Loan Staff

Jackie Keenan, Fm Loans
Deb Parkhurst, Fm Loans
Mack Francoeur, FLO
Russ LaFollette, Loan Mgr

Web Sites

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
<http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>
<http://www.usda.gov>



County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to David Godfrey who was elected to represent farmers from Adams, Wheatland, Jefferson, Pittsford, and Wright Townships. This is Dave's first term as a County Committee Member. We say thank you to Duane Towne who served 9 years on the County Committee for a job well done! The County Committee meets in regular session the second Tuesday of every month at 8:30 am at the FSA Office. These regular sessions are open to the public.

Clearing Land? Attention!!!!

- Are you clearing fence rows to expand cropland for more corn?
- Are you clearing woods or scrub brush to expand cropland?
- Are you intending to crop areas that have not been cropped in the last several years?
- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are you draining a wet area with the intention to crop it?

To remain eligible for USDA benefits the following items must be followed:

- **Not** produce an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after December 23, 1985.
- **Not** convert wetlands to allow planting of any agricultural commodity.
- **Not** plant agricultural commodities on highly erodible fields unless actively applying an approved conservation plan.

If you have any questions that something you plan to do could jeopardize your eligibility, please contact your NRCS or FSA conservation person. With farmers attempting to obtain more cropland, check the status of the soil for conservation compliance before planting new acreage.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Good Luck and Welcome!!

Linda Kline has moved up the ladder into a County Operations Trainee position before becoming a County Executive Director. Congratulations are in order for Linda. Carrie McCollough has resigned to seek other personal avenues. Good luck to her. Angela Lanius and Candice Alexander have been hired in their places. Angela will be handling crop reports for CRP, grain crops and other annual or perennial crops. Candice will be handling farm records changes and payment limitation and eligibility. Welcome to Angela and Candice.

Wool and Mohair LDPs

The 2007 crop year for wool and mohair began January 1st. Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are available for 2007 wool and mohair.

Make sure you have a CCC-633EZ on file before you lose beneficial interest in your 2007 Wool. You can obtain this form online or from our office.



DCP Sign-up Extended to Aug 3rd.

The DCP Sign-up Deadline has been extended from June 1st to August 3, 2007 for this year only. Anyone signing after Aug 3rd but before September 30th will pay a \$100 late fee per farm.

DCP contract participation is an annual event. Producers need to sign a new CCC-509, Contract each year. Contact Shirley at Extension 109 to make an appointment.

If an operator shares with the landowner, the landowner must also sign the CCC-509 contract. If the operator cash rents, he may provide a copy of his lease or provide a cash rent certification statement that addresses the following:

- The producer is requesting a payment to be made after June 30th.
- The farm was cash rented by the producer in the previous fiscal year and the producer received the DCP payment for that year.
- The operator should also designate the farm number and owner's name.

Producers can enroll in DCP online. USDA provides eDCP services in a secure online environment that protects participants' privacy through stringent security measures. FSA provides all producers with DCP nationwide customer service, meaning you may visit any FSA office throughout the country to complete your DCP contract. Producers must have a Level 2 eAuthentication account.

Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be made by direct deposit unless there is a financial hardship to prevent it. Producers need to notify us when accounts change to prevent delay of payments

CRP-Mid Contract Management

Means having NRCS determine if any actions are needed on your part to improve the CRP cover. CRP cover may benefit from light disking, grass-specific herbicides, interseeding with legumes or wildflowers, or prescribed burning. Cost share is available for these actions.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low interest loans are available for producers to purchase grain bins, handling equipment and other grain storage equipment. The seven year loans can be used not only for the purchase but construction of the equipment, including drying equipment and remodeling of existing facilities. **The current interest rate for April is 4.5%** for the life of the loan. Loan installments are made annually over a period of 7 years. All farm storage facility loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. For loans exceeding \$50,000 or where a borrower's aggregate outstanding loan balance exceeds \$50,000 a lien on real estate will be required. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85% of the net cost of the equipment up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment of 15% is required.

Measurement Service Rate Changes

Measurement Service Fees for farm visits have changed to a minimum of \$46.00 for the first hour and \$8 for every 30 minutes after the first hour. The rate includes time for travel and paperwork completion. This will also be the fee for late acreage reports. This fee is by farm so producers will especially want to report their acreage by the deadline date to avoid these fees. This includes CRP acreage reports. Please take note of these changes.

Conservation Reserve Program – Bird Enthusiasts

Hillsdale County has a program for habitat buffers for Upland Birds. Buffer strips are planted to native grasses to attract quail, pheasants, songbirds and other upland birds. The width of the buffer will be 30' to 120' and will be around fields, along filter strips, ditches, or windbreaks. Cost share assistance up to a maximum of 90% is available to help establish the grasses. U.S. Fish and Wildlife is also aiding in the establishment of the buffers. **Contact Nina at Ext 103 for more information.** Hillsdale County presently has 82 acres enrolled in this program.

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Dept of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling any FSA Office.



Special Accommodations

Special Accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, visually impaired or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodation is required, contact Judy Hostetler, CED at (517) 849-9890.



Reporting Crop Acreages

Producers are required to report their planted crops and acres to FSA in order to maintain eligibility for several program benefits:

- Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) payments
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Annual Rental Payments
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Payments

The deadline to report fall-seeded small grains is July 2, 2007. The deadline to report all other crops is July 16, 2007.

Crop reports on Form FSA-578, Report of Commodities must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Prevented planting and failed acreage should also be reported.

We will be mailing out a list of all the farms our records show the producer is associated with. In addition we will mail the aerial photocopies out. We ask producers to write what crop is planted in each field, including alfalfa, or grass and idle land. If partial fields are planted, indicate the acres of each parcel. If sharing, indicate percent and with whom. The planting dates are needed for RMA. Mail back or drop the photos off to our office a minimum of three days prior to any appointment. After they are dropped off, we load them into the computer and prepare the FSA-578 for signing. Producers can make an appointment to stop in and sign them or have them mailed to them for signing and then return them to the office by the deadline. This process helps shorten the time the producer spends in the office.

Planting Fruits and Vegetables

Planting fruits or vegetables on DCP base acres may adversely affect your program benefits. Please contact this office before you plant or lease land for production of fruits, nut trees, or vegetables. We will discuss acreage reporting requirements in order to prevent possible violation of program provisions, payment reductions, and severe penalties. Call Shirley at Ext 109

FSA Farm Loans

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who can not obtain commercial credit from a bank or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.

Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmers as a person whom:

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% of the county's average size.

Youth Loans

FSA can make loans to youths to establish and operate income producing projects in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations. **The maximum loan size is \$5,000.** To qualify:

- Be between 10 and 20 years old
- Live in a town of less than 10,000
- Be unable to obtain a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income producing project in a supervised program of work.

Applicants must also be capable of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. Contact Russ LaFollette or Mack Francoeur at Ext. 107 or Ext 105

Unauthorized Disposition

Loan grain is not to be disposed of through feeding, selling, or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization. The financial penalties for this are severe. Always call the office before any loan grain is fed or sold.



Appointments Recommended

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office.

We appreciate your patience and remember farm safety this spring!

Judy Hostettler, CED

Direct Counter Cyclical (DCP) Payment Rates Table	
Commodity	Payment Rate
Wheat	\$0.52 per bushel
Corn	\$0.40 per bushel
Sorghum	\$0.27 per bushel
Barley	\$0.24 per bushel
Oats	\$0.024 per bushel

Important Dates to Remember

- May 28 Office Closed – Memorial Day
- May 31 Deadline for Large Grain Loans and LDPs
- June 1 Deadline to request Recon for 2007 crop year
- June 12 COC Meeting Date
- July 2 Deadline to report small grains
- July 4 Office Closed-Independence Day
- July 10 COC Meeting Date
- July 16 Deadline to report spring seeded crops
- Aug 3 Deadline to Sign up for DCP
- Aug 14 COC Meeting Date

Real Estate for Sale Visit the following web site for government owned farms, houses, lots & buildings.
<http://www.resales.usda.gov>

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 202-720-2900 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.