Farm Service Agency

May 2007

Howell County News

Howell County
USDA Service Center

Howell County FSA
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www.fsa.usda.gov/**

Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
Steve Gleghorn
Pat Chapin
Don Nielsen

Staff
Dennis Johnson, CED
Susie Williams, PT
LeAnn Barnard, PT

James J. Kyle
District Director

Jared D. Weydert
Farm Loan Manager

Reporting Crop Acreage

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments. Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Additionally, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers are required to file reports by June 30 for fall- and spring-seeded small grains and July 31 for all other crops. Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for the crop.

Failed Acreage:
Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

DCP Sign Up Extended

The sign-up deadline for the 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has been extended to August 3, 2007.

The extension is due to issues involving the performance of the Farm Service Agency's web-based computer system. The late-file fee of $100 will only be assessed for farms that are enrolled after August 3, 2007 and before September 30, 2007.

Enrollment in DCP for the 2007 contract period began on October 1, 2006, and was scheduled to end on June 1, 2007. The extension applies only to the enrollment time frame, and does not extend the DCP contract period.

For more information about DCP and other FSA programs, please visit:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov

FSA Signature Requirements

Proper signatures on Farm Service Agency contracts, applications and forms must be submitted before the document will be considered as filed. All entities, including revocable and irrevocable trusts, corporations, partnerships, estates, etc., must provide evidence of signature authority stipulating those individuals who are authorized to represent the entity. FSA cannot accept signatures without such documentation on file. Examples of acceptable evidence include trust agreements, corporate charters or resolutions, partnership agreements and court orders of appointment. Spouses can sign for one another on most program documents unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office staff. An FSA-211 may be filed to delegate signature authority for FSA program purposes to another individual

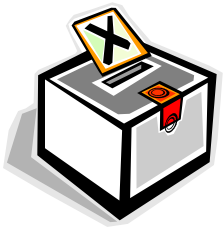
Rural Youth Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by ru-

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

ral youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. Contact your local FSA office for more details.

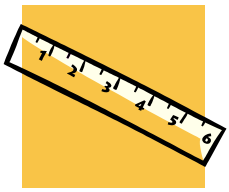
2007 COC Election Information



One of FSA's responsibilities is to conduct County Committee elections in an open manner that ensures accountability. County FSA Offices will provide local organizations representing socially disadvantaged groups with detailed information about the COC election process. FSA is reaching out to agricultural communities to get equitable representation on their county committees.

Groups representing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, will be actively solicited for COC election candidates, and encouraged to fill out a nomination form (**FSA-669A**). Under represented farmers and ranchers are encouraged to step up and participate in their county's COC election process. Producers will notice posters and announcements displayed in businesses, churches, and other public places. COC election fact sheets can be found online at **http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA** under the News & Events tab on the FSA homepage.

Measurement Service



Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have services completed on the farm. Measurement service guarantees compliance with a program, if the planting is limited to the measured area. Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact your local FSA office.

Maintaining CRP Cover

CRP cover maintenance is the participant's responsibility and must be done according to the conservation plan. All CRP maintenance activity, such as mowing, burning and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting season for wildlife and in accordance with the conservation plan. Spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting season if certain criteria are met. The ending date for the primary nesting season in Missouri is July 15th.

Conservation Compliance

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land.

In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetland converted after Dec. 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after Nov. 28, 1990.

Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.

Utilizing GIS

The Farm Service Agency currently employs a Geographic Information System (GIS), a computer-based tool for capturing, storing, mapping and analyzing geographic farm data. FSA uses GIS to replace the old manual system of hard copy maps and aerial photographs. This digital technology is faster and more accurate than the old way, and saves taxpayers money over the long term.

Here's how GIS works. Up-to-date aerial photographs of the entire county are scanned so they can be stored in the computer. The photos become the base layer of the GIS. Technicians examine the photos and identify individual farms. They then outline each farm field, creating another layer of data called the Common Land Unit (CLU).

The software stores the shape of the field as a "polygon," and ties it to a specific location using latitude and longitude. The software can then automatically calculate the size of each field. The CLU layer will be connected to a database that contains information about the cropping history for each particular field.

GIS gives us the tools to provide quicker, more accurate information to producers and reduce the amount of time the producer must spend in the FSA office. As an added bonus, producers can review their farm's GIS files online from the comfort of their homes.

Outreach Program

The Farm Service Agency makes direct and guaranteed loans to socially disadvantaged applicants, enabling them to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds are reserved each year specifically for these loans, but regular loan funds can also be used. Direct loans may be made to qualified applicants by FSA for both farm operating and farm ownership purposes. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to Federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. FSA typically guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.
Persons who are primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations may apply. A family-size farm is one that a family can operate and manage itself. Socially disadvantaged loan applicants do not receive automatic approval. In addition to being members of a socially disadvantaged group, individual applicants under this program must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance, including:

- Have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations.
- Have sufficient education; training, or at least one-year's experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch within the last five years for a direct operating loan, or, for a direct farm ownership loan, have participated in the business operation of a farm or ranch for three years;
- Be a citizen of the United States (or a legal resident alien), including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Island Trust Territories;
- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs; and
- Possess legal capacity to incur loan obligations.

A socially disadvantaged person is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Contact the FSA County Office Farm Loan Program staff for more details about this program, and other financial options.

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Quote: Whenever there are in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on. The small landowners are the most precious part of a state.

Author: Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826, Third President of the USA

Howell County FSA Office
3210 Hoover Drive
West Plains. MO 65775

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Financial FACTS

for agriculture's future

Respond to USDA's Agricultural Resource Management Survey and let the financial facts be known for agriculture's policies and programs.

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Selected Interest Rates for May 2007	
90-Day Treasury Bill	5.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	5%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.25%
Limited Resource	%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4%
Emergency	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility	%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	%
Tobacco (TTPP) Discount Rate	10%

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