

# USDA

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## Farm Service Agency

**Mecosta County  
USDA Service  
Center**

18260 Northland Dr  
Big Rapids, MI. 49307-9272

### County Committee

Mike Hopkins – Chairperson  
John Orr – V. Chairperson  
Gerald Mondrella – Member  
Beth Storey – Advisor

### County Program Technicians

Sherry Adams  
Towna Aris  
Shelley Lobert  
Heather Sellers (Intermittent)

### Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean

### County Executive Director

Travis Murray

### Field Reporter

Don Foos

**Office Hours:** 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday – Friday  
*Closed All Federal Holidays*

## **September 2007**

### **FINAL DEADLINES and DATES to REMEMBER**

- \*September 10, 2007 Livestock Compensation Program and Livestock Indemnity Program Signup Begins
- \*September 30, 2007 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) Contract Deadline (\$100 Late Fee)
- \*September 30, 2007 2007 MILCX Program Ends
- \*October 8, 2007 Office Closed – Columbus Day
- \*October 15, 2007 Crop Disaster Program Signup Begins
- \*October 23, 2007 Mecosta County Committee Meeting, 9:00 am

### **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 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.

### **2007 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP)**

It is still not too late to sign up DCP for 2007. September 28, 2007 is the last possible day that you can sign up for 2007. A **late fee of \$100 per FSA farm** will be charged.

### **Thank You!!!**

The Mecosta County FSA Office would like to thank the following groups for allowing the FSA to have a presence at one of their events this last year: Mecosta County Farm Bureau, Mecosta County 4H Fair, Lakeview Ag Seminar, and Charity Baptist Women's Fellowship. If you would like a FSA representative to speak or provide information at one of your events, please contact our office at (231) 796-2659 ext. 2.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Eligible ranchers and other livestock producers can apply to receive benefits under the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) beginning Sept. 10, 2007. Eligible farmers can sign-up for the Crop Disaster Program (CDP) beginning Oct. 15, 2007, if they suffered quantity losses to their crops. USDA will announce and conduct CDP sign-up for quality losses as soon as possible.

Our office will attend training on October 17 - 18 to learn how to administer the following programs in Mecosta County.

LCP compensates livestock producers for feed losses occurring between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, due to a natural disaster. This can include producers who suffered losses resulting from blizzards that started in 2006 and continued into January 2007. Livestock producers may elect to receive compensation for calendar year 2007 grazing season losses that are attributable to wildfire natural disaster occurring during the applicable period as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Producers in primary counties declared secretarial disaster areas or certain counties declared presidential disaster areas between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, are eligible as are producers located in counties contiguous to those counties. Also, producers in a primary (or contiguous) county that received an Administrator's Physical Loss Notice directly associated with a disaster declaration made by President Bush may also be eligible. Producers incurring a loss in more than one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to apply for benefits.

LIP compensates livestock producers for livestock losses between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, that resulted from natural disasters, including losses due to blizzards that started in 2006 and continued into January 2007. Producers in primary counties declared secretarial disaster areas or certain counties declared presidential disaster areas between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, are eligible as are producers located in counties contiguous to those counties. Also, producers in a primary (or contiguous) county that received an Administrator's Physical Loss Notice directly associated with a disaster declaration made by President Bush may also be eligible. Producers incurring eligible livestock losses in more than one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to apply for benefits.

CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006, or 2007 crops from natural disasters if the crop was planted before Feb. 28, 2007, or, in the case of prevented plantings, for crops that would have been planted before Feb. 28, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 must choose only one year to apply for benefits. Producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year. **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.** Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP.

**\*\*\* Our current understanding is that Mecosta County Crops harvested in 2007 are not eligible under this Disaster Package.** 2007 crop losses due to drought will have to be covered in future legislation. If this changes, we will let you know.

### USDA Representative Willing to Meet and Discuss Programs

Once the New Farm Bill progresses through congress, there may be changes that cause you and other producers to have questions or concerns. If you or your group would like a USDA representative to meet with you to try and answer questions, please call us at (231) 796-2659 ext. 2. We will do our best to accommodate your needs and questions.

## **CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM (CSP)**

Information will be coming your way regarding CSP that will be available to Mecosta County farmers in the future. It is now time to become aware and prepare ourselves for the financial benefits this program will offer. This program:

- \* Is a Voluntary Program
- \* Rewards Those Practicing Conservation and Environmental Management
- \* Supports Ongoing Land Stewardship
- \* Provides Payments for Maintaining and Enhancing Natural Resources

Conservation records will be needed as part of the eligibility. Plan ahead by reviewing where you are at with your records and land stewardship. Watch the mail, newspapers and farm magazines that address this program. Additional information is available from the Mecosta County Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Jennifer Taylor at (231) 796-2659 ext. 3 or on the web at [www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/](http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/).

### **CALL AHEAD**

Please call ahead before coming to our office so that you can save yourself some time. FSA offices across the nation have experiencing an inability to access the web in order to process contracts for programs such as DCP. Because of this, our office may be limited to the times of day that we can access these contracts. We also are tediously going through each file to do national checklist requirements. If possible, please make an appointment before you come in. This will allow us to serve you more effectively and efficiently.

### **PLEASE HELP US HELP YOU!!!**

Have you bought, sold, picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, or moved land into another's entity's name (such a trust, corporation, etc...). If you have made these types of changes, it is your responsibility to make our office aware that these changes have been made. Please notify us if you have any questions or concerns. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. NOW is the time to notify our office of these changes.

### **INSURANCE REMINDER**

If you are required to carry crop insurance because of a payment you have received in the past, make sure you acquire it before the closing date. This will help you avoid repayment of the payment.

### **FOREIGN LANDOWNER 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. The Farm Service Agency 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 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Mecosta County FSA Office  
18260 Northland Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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## **Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged**

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, the FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer 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 FSA management program
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size.

Entity members must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Socially disadvantaged groups are Hispanics, American Indians, African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and women.

## **Rural Youth Loans**

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 rural 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 Rick Dean, Farm Loan Manager, for more details.

**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.**