



Farm Service Agency

PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ALPENA -ALCONA-MONTMORENCY COUNTIES

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NEWSLETTER NO. 1

JANUARY, 2008

EVENTS & DEADLINES

- February 18, 2008 – George Washington Birthday Holiday
- March 15, 2008 – To obtain Crop Ins. or NAP policy
- March 31, 2008 – To apply for Small Grain loan or LDP
- No Deadline – Crop Disaster, Pasture Loss, Dairy Milk Loss
- May 31, 2008 - To apply for corn, soybean, minor oilseed loan or LDP

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Paul J. Anstead – County Executive Director
Lloyd Parks – Farm Loan Manager
Desiree Compeau – Program Technician – FLP
Michelle Katona – Program Technician – FP
Janet Marwede – Program Technician – FP
Tom Hoppe – Field Assistant

TOPICS THIS ISSUE

- USDA Online Services
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Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required please call Paul Anstead at 989-356-3596.

USDA ONLINE SERVICES

USDA Agencies (FSA, NRCS, RD) have available online service on the World Wide Web. The address of the web site is <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. The web site features information such as forms (eForms), fact sheets, LDP rates, customer statements, and much more. Additional options are available to provide on-line service for applying for program benefits. To access these secured applications, a user id and password must be obtained. All producers with internet access are encouraged to obtain an eAuthentication Level 2 account. Contact the FSA office for further details. Also available is the FSA web site where more information about FSA programs can be obtained. The address is www.fsa.usda.gov.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The County Committee elections were held this fall and the ballots were counted at the December COC meeting. Elections for the Alpena-Alcona-Montmorency COC took place in Local Administrative Area 1 (LAA 1), which represents all the townships of Montmorency County, and in Local Administrative Area 3 (LAA 3), which represent Ossineke, Sanborn, and Wilson townships of Alpena County.

The results of the election are:

<u>LAA</u>	<u>COC Member</u>
LAA 1	John Herrick
LAA 3	Michael Timm

Congratulations to John and Mike for being elected to the COC to represent the producers of LAA 1 and LAA 3. The COC is responsible for administering the FSA office and farm programs. Thank you to all the producers that participated in the election process.

The COC met for the organizational meeting after elections to elect the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the County Committee. The results are: Chairperson - John Herrick; Vice Chairperson – Michael Timm
Member - Amy Lewis; Member – Edward McKinnon; Member - Janice Emerick

COUNTY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Alpena-Alcona-Montmorency COC is the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 9:30 A.M. at the Alpena FSA office. The regular session of the County Committee meeting is open to the public.

2005, 2006, & 2007 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM

The 2005, 2006, and 2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP) has been authorized to provide assistance to producers for calendar year 2005, 2006, or 2007 crop losses. The initial legislation covered crops planted from January 1, 2005 to February 28, 2007. Recent legislation extended the crop planting date to December 31, 2007. 2008 crops planted in the fall of 2007 are not eligible. An adverse weather condition must have caused the crop loss due to prevented planting, reduced production, or reduced quality. Eligible crops must have been covered by a crop insurance policy or the Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) through FSA. The loss must be in excess of 35% of normal to qualify for assistance. The normal yields used for this program are program established yields or the producers established yield for crop insurance, whichever is higher. The producer's acreage for payment is based on the units established by crop insurance or the NAP program. Production from crop insurance claims will be used for crops that have a claim. For eligible crops without a claim, the producer must submit production records that are verifiable or reliable. Good crop management practices must be verified by submitting seed, fertilizer, and chemical receipts. The signup period is underway and no ending date has been announced. Payments can be issued when all necessary documentation is received and the application is approved by the COC. Contact the FSA office as soon as possible if you suffered a crop loss that may qualify.



LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) has been authorized to provide assistance to livestock producers who suffered feed and pasture losses because of drought conditions in 2005, 2006, or 2007. The initial legislation covered pasture losses that occurred from January 1, 2005 to February 28, 2007. Recent legislation extended the pasture loss date to December 31, 2007. Producers in a county are eligible if the County had a Secretarial disaster designation for drought or contiguous to a county with a designation. Producers in Alpena and Montmorency counties are eligible for LCP in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Producers in Alcona County are eligible for LCP in 2007. Producers must establish the type and acres of eligible pasture and the percent of pasture loss suffered in the year they wish to apply. Producers must also establish the number of eligible livestock owned on April 1, 2005 for 2005, June 1, 2006 for 2006, or April 1, 2007 for 2007. Eligible livestock are livestock maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation and physically located in the disaster county on the beginning date of the disaster period as listed above. The eligible livestock must be going to graze the pasture acres where the loss occurred. Applications are being accepted from eligible livestock producers who suffered pasture loss. No ending signup date has been announced.





DAIRY DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP-III) has been authorized to provide assistance to dairy producers who suffered milk production losses because of drought conditions in 2005, 2006, or 2007. The initial legislation covered milk production losses that occurred from January 1, 2005 to February 28, 2007. Recent legislation extended the milk production loss date to December 31, 2007. Producers in a county are eligible if the County had a Secretarial disaster designation for drought or contiguous to a county with a designation. Producers in Alpena and Montmorency counties are eligible for DDAP-III in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Producers in Alcona County are eligible for DDAP-III in 2007.

Dairy producers will be required to submit the total yearly milk production and the number of milking cows per month for the year they apply. Bring documentation of milk production and cow numbers. Signup will begin in the near future. No ending date has been established yet. The program has been funded with \$16 million dollars. If applications exceed the funding, payments may be adjusted. Payments will be made after the end of signup.

COMMODITY LOAN PROGRAM

Commodity loans are available using harvested crops as collateral. The proceeds from a loan could be used to help with cash flow or to pay off other loans. The term of the loan is nine months, starting the month after the loan is disbursed. The interest rate for the loan is the rate in effect for the month the loan is disbursed, subject to change in January using the January interest rate. The deadline is March 31, 2007 for small grains and May 31, 2007 for corn and soybeans. To be eligible for a commodity loan, crops of wheat, oats, barley, corn, soybeans and minor oilseed crops must be produced by the producer and the acreage of the crop must be reported by the crop reporting deadline (July 1 for fall planted crops, July 15 for all other crops). If the crop is not reported by the deadline, a late filing fee will be charged and physical evidence must be present on the field.

The producer must maintain beneficial interest in the commodity through the life of the loan. A producer is considered to retain beneficial interest in the commodity if the producer has control of the commodity, has the risk of loss, and has title of the commodity.

The commodity must be kept in eligible storage, such as a bin, flat storage, silo or other eligible storage.

The producer is responsible for maintaining the quality of the commodity in farm storage through the term of the loan, including any extended periods.

The quantity of the commodity loan that is going to be sold, fed, or removed from the designated storage must be repaid before disposition. The repayment can be made using the following methods: (1) principle plus interest; (2) market gain repayment – production evidence must be provided; (3) request authorization to move a quantity before repayment – the buyer of the quantity must be recorded on the authorization and the buyer is responsible for repayment of the quantity. Failure to abide by the loan requirements will result in administrative action up to and including the calling of the loan and assessment of liquidated damages.

UPDATING COUNTY OFFICE RECORDS

There are several records that must be reviewed and updated because of changes each year before you are eligible to receive benefits from FSA programs.

Land Changes - If you bought, sold, leased new land, or not leasing land for this current crop year, you should report these changes to the FSA office. All land owned by the same person within a county should be combined as one farm operation. Base acres on land being sold may be divided or designated using the landowner method which is the division of contract acres in the manner agreed to by the parent farm owner and purchaser.

Sod-Swamp Determinations - All land that you own or operate must have a highly erodible and wetland determination. Any highly erodible land must have a conservation plan being followed. Areas designated as wetlands cannot be altered to allow cropping.

Direct Deposit - Effective January 1, 1999, all payments for any program must be issued by direct deposit. A form SF-1199A must be completed and on file at the FSA office to make payments by direct deposit. Please inform the FSA office if a change occurs with the account number or a change in the financial institution.

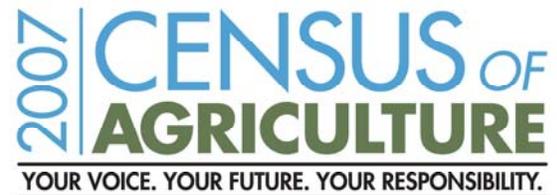
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2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Report forms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture were mailed to farm and ranch operators on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site.



NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

FARM LOAN PROGRAM

The calendar year 2008 has begun. All Farm Loan Program borrowers are required to submit 2007 farm records of income and expenses along with a cash flow plan for 2008. Please contact the office to schedule an appointment to complete this requirement. Producer's who receive a servicing package, because they are past due on payments, are required to respond as soon as possible but no later than 60 days from the date of mailing.

FSA lends money and provides credit counseling and supervision to eligible applicants who operate family-size farms and who are temporarily unable to obtain credit from private loan institutions. Several types of loan programs are available. Under the Guaranteed Loan Program, FSA guarantees loans made by commercial lending institutions for up to 95% of any loss. For those unable to qualify for a Guaranteed Loan, FSA offers Direct Loans which are made and serviced by FSA officials. Funding for Direct Loans is more limited, and applications must wait sometimes until funds become available. Contact any FSA office for more details.

Alpena, Alcona, Cheboygan, Montmorency, and Presque Isle counties are all among those counties which have been designated as disaster areas based on drought losses during the 2007 growing season. If you have qualifying losses of 30%, or more, on at least one crop due to drought conditions, you may qualify for an EM loan at 3.75% interest. If you think you qualify, gather together your production histories for the past 4 years and give Lloyd or Desiree a call.

AGRICULTURAL FOREIGN INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT

Foreign persons who acquire, transfer, or have an interest in agricultural land must report these holdings and transactions to the Secretary of Agriculture. Reports are due within 90 days of the transaction or change of status. Contact the FSA office for further information.