



Branch County News

Branch County FSA
387 N Willowbrook, Ste. F
Coldwater, MI 49036
517-278-2725 (phone)
517-278-5176 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov

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

County Committee
Curt Albright
Neil Carpenter
Kevin Miller
Jill Bucklin

Staff
Farm Programs -
Kelly Gruner, PT
Joyce Hook, PT
Linda Snyder, PT
Carri McCollough, PT
Jessica Mobley, PT
Hope R. Gentile, CED



Dates to Remember:
November 4th – MILC
signup begins
November 26th – 10.0
acre or less DCP signup
deadline
November 27th – Office
Closed for Thanksgiving
December 1st – DCP and
signup begins
December 1st – final day
to return COC election
ballots
December 1st – final date
to purchase 2009 NAP
coverage for fall crops
December 25th – Office
closed for Christmas
January 1st – Office
closed for New Year's
January 31st – final loan
availability for
Wool/Mohair/Unshorn
Pelts
March 1st – ACRE signup
begins

Joyce Hook to Retire



Come One Come All!!!!

Joyce Hook has given outstanding dedication to the Branch County farmers for over 19 years. Joyce will retire on December 31st and an Open House to celebrate and wish Joyce all the best in retirement will be:

**Wednesday, December 17th
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

Branch County FSA conference room.



Curt Albright

Curt served on the Branch County Committee for 9 years. Curt has reached term limits and was unable to run for reelection. Curt's knowledge of farming and the Branch County area was a value that is not easily replaced.

Thank-you for your time & talents Curt!

Appointments are encouraged.

Making appointments saves everyone's time.



County Committee Election

Ballots were mailed November 3rd, to all eligible voters in LAA 3 (Batavia, Coldwater, Bethel, Ovid, Gilead and Kinderhook townships). You are voting for the individual you feel will best serve the farmers in Branch County. This position was formally held by Curt Albright. The deadline to return ballots is December 1st.

NON-INSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

The final deadline for 2009 Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2009 crops which had a sales closing date prior to December 1st (**Previous deadlines: hay, pasture September 30th; perennial crops November 20th; honey, maple sap December 1st**) has been extended to December 1, 2008. This deadline extension was made due to the late signing of the 2008 Farm Bill and is a one time extension. This will allow producers who did not purchase coverage on hay or pasture to purchase coverage. The March 15, 2009 deadline for spring seeded crops remains unchanged.

A change for 2009 crops is that the enrollment fee has been increased from \$100 per crop to \$250 per crop up to \$750, per county, and \$1875 per producer.



**Happy Holidays from
All of us at FSA!!!**

Direct Deposit

You may want to rethink your “hardship waivers” for direct deposit. The county office will no longer be issuing checks. Starting December 4, 2008, all payments will be issued from the Kansas City location. By the time we get these payments to you, your money could have already been in your account.

If you want to get your payments faster, stop in today for a direct deposit election form.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holding to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold 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.

2009 Reconstitutions

We are processing requests for farm reconstitutions at this time. Get your request in early, so you are ready to sign up as soon as the time comes.

BIG CHANGE – Farms with less than 10.0 acres of base

Policy was established that prohibited farms having base acres of 10.0 acres or less from being combined with another farm, except if the ownership had changed after May 22, 2008.

This restriction has been changed! Producers may now request to reconstitute these farms as long as all other requirements are met. Contact the office today if you have farms with less than 10.0 acres of base and you want to reconstitute them.

CONDUCTING BUSINESS ELECTRONICALLY WITH USDA

eGOV provides USDA Service Center Agencies (FSA, NRCS, RD) customers the option of electronically accessing, printing, filling out and submitting forms and program applications.

To fully utilize eGOV capabilities producers may set up their own account for electronic signature authority at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov.

Current programs available through eGOV include loan deficiency payments, Direct and Counter Cyclical Program contracts, and financial inquiries that allow producers to track USDA payments and deposits.



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.
- Direct Deposit – to ensure payments are deposited correctly, it is imperative that any changes in bank account information are updated immediately.
- Development – any new parcels of land removed for non-ag uses 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.

Change Of Ownership

We are **NOT** notified by the County Court House when you file paperwork for a change of land ownership. We are a Federal Agency and are not connected with the court’s filing system in any way. If you purchase land or sell land, please let us know as soon as possible. This will make signing up for future programs much faster.



Crop Disaster Program - Quantity & Quality

The CDP now provides benefits to farmers who suffered **quality** losses (as well as quantity losses) from natural disaster and related conditions to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops. Producers must choose only one year to receive benefits. Contact the office for further details.

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs

The 2008 Farm Bill appropriated the following five new Supplemental Disaster Programs:

- SURE – Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

For producers to be eligible they must purchase at least the CAT level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for non-insurable crops on **all crops (including pasture and hay) in all counties**.

PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY & PAYMENT LIMITATION

Eligibility rules have changed for 2009 and subsequent years. New eligibility forms (CCC-902) will need to be completed to determine attribution amounts and organizational structure. We are now looking at real “persons”.

In order to be eligible for the disaster programs outlined above the Non-farm adjusted gross income (AGI) must be less than \$500,000. If a person or legal entity has an AGI that exceeds \$750,000 they are ineligible for direct DCP payments only. If a person or legal entity has an AGI of non-farm income that exceeds \$1,000,000 they are ineligible for all conservation benefits.

AVERAGE CROP REVENUE ELECTION (ACRE) PROGRAM

Sign-up March 1st, 2009 to June 1st, 2009

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes ACRE program payments. Beginning with the 2009 crop year, producers will have the option to participate in a state-level revenue protection program instead of the counter-cyclical program.

In crop years 2009 through 2012, producers who make an irrevocable election to receive ACRE Program payments will:

1. Not receive counter-cyclical payments on enrolled farms.
2. Be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.
3. Be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.

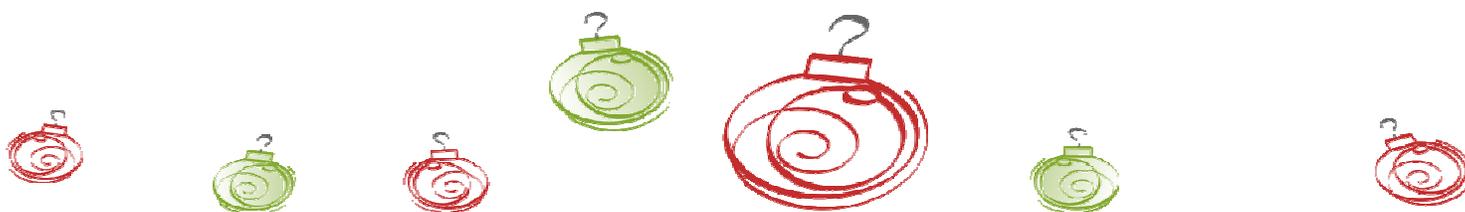
If actual state per acre revenue is less than the guarantee and if a producer suffers an actual revenue loss for the crop on the farm, then the producer will receive an ACRE payment equal to the difference between the state per-acre revenue guarantee and the state actual revenue calculation paid on 83.3 percent (85 percent for 2012) of the acres planted to the covered commodity on the farm.

2009 DIRECT AND COUNTERCYCLICAL (DCP) PROGRAM

Sign up for the 2009 DCP begins on December 1st and will run through June 1, 2009. Payments will be computed on 85% of the base acres.

One change is that the new Farm Bill prohibits direct payments to farms if the base acres are 10 acres or less, unless the farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged farmer or limited resource farmer.

All contracts must be signed by June 1, 2009. Please call to make an appointment.



2008 WOOL/MOHAIR/UNSHORN PELTS

The final loan availability date to request a marketing assistance loan or LDP for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts is January 31, 2009.



Applications are being accepted for a full-time program technician position. You can receive an application at the Branch County FSA Office in Coldwater, or go online at www.usajobs.gov.

DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS??????

Branch County is setting up a contact list so that we can contact you with updates to program deadlines & changes, fact sheets, news releases, etc. If you are interested in being on this contact list please provide the office with your email address or send an email to hope.gentile@mi.usda.gov to be added to this list. This list will be used solely for the above stated reasons and will not be provided to any other source.

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Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, visually impaired or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodations are required, contact Hope Gentile, County Executive Director, at (269) 471-9111 ext. 2.