



May 2008

Emmet-Charlevoix County News

Emmet-Charlevoix
USDA Service Center

Emmet-Charlevoix
FSA Office
2235 E. Mitchell Rd.
Petoskey, MI. 49770
www.fsa.usda.gov

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

County Committee
Shane Kilpatrick-
Chairperson
Beverly Hinkley-Vice-
Chairperson
Wilson Boss-Member

The County Commit-
tee meets the second
Tuesday of each
month starting at 9:30
a.m.

County Office Staff
Sharon Roberts,
Program Technician

County Executive
Director
Carmen A. Church,
carmen.church@mi.usda.gov

FSA for Kids
www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids

2008 COC Election Information

One of FSA's responsibilities is to conduct County Committee elections in an open manner that ensures accountability. FSA will provide local organizations representing socially disadvantaged groups with detailed information about the COC election process. The agency 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.

Reporting Crop Acreage

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres 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 and crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.



Crop report form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

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.

Final Planting Dates

Below you will find the final planting dates for crops in Presque Isle and Cheboygan counties:

Barley – May 20; Corn – June 5; Dry Beans – June 25; Oats – May 20; Potatoes – June 15; Soybeans – June 15; Wheat - October 5.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$200,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$949,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and Loans for Socially Disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by Aug. 1 for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

If DCP direct payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded.

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 stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery where an on-site visit is not required and are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

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 of the practices.

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 enrollment availability, please contact your local FSA office.

For detailed information concerning loan eligibility or the different available loan programs, contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the FSA Office in person or by phone.

Farm Record Changes

If you have purchased or sold land, leased additional land or changed tenants, please notify the FSA office so farm records may be updated.

For Land Purchases:

- A copy of the deed is required
- All landowners must furnish their tax ID # if they are enrolling in a program.

Sodbuster Regulations

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that convert native vegetation, such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage before bringing land into production.

In addition, producers and the producer’s affiliates have to file an AD-1026 with the staff in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation provisions will not be violated.

GIS

As part of a decade long program to digitally map the nation’s farms and fields, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis.

Transitioning to the GIS environment has made good business sense for FSA for a variety of reasons. For one, CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of orthophotography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). For years, FSA had been using hard copy maps that were 10 years old or more. During that time span, it was difficult to keep information accurate due to urban development and other land use changes. USDA Service Centers use NAIP in order to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Second, using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices. In conjunction with new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated.

Lastly, the GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

More information about the Common Land Unit and NAIP can be found by visiting online, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.



Dates To Remember

May 26 – Office closed in observance of Memorial Day.

May 31 – Final date to obtain Loans or LDP's for feed grains.

June 30 – Deadline to report fall seeded small grain.

July 15 – Deadline to report all other crops and CRP.

Ongoing
Continuous CRP,
Farm Storage Facility
Loans.

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 date for the primary nesting season in Michigan is May 1st through July 31st.



Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency has joined with the Risk Management Agency to prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.



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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.