



July/August 2008



Genesee/Shiawassee County News

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CERTIFICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED.....

THE CROP CERTIFICATION DEADLINE OF JUNE 30TH FOR FALL SEEDED CROPS AND JULY 15TH FOR SPRING SEEDED CROPS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO AUGUST 15, 2008.

CERTIFICATION OF ACREAGE REMAINS A REQUIREMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A NUMBER OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE 2008/2012 FARM PROGRAM.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FSA OFFICE TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.

ONE COPY OF YOUR CERTIFICATION WILL BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE. THIS COPY CAN BE PROVIDED TO YOUR CROP INSURANCE AGENT, HOWEVER IF ADDITIONAL COPIES ARE REQUIRED, A MINIMAL FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR EACH COPY.

COMMON LAND UNIT MAPS BEING MAILED.....Important information

The new CLU maps will be mailed shortly, the following questions may answer how, what and why.

- Color maps are being mailed to landowners, black and white maps are being mailed to operators.
- You have 30 days from the date of the letter to dispute boundaries. If no disputes are reported, the GIS measurements will be recorded for all program purposes.

2008/2012 FARM BILL PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

Sign up for the 2008 farm program began June 25, 2008. Please contact your local FSA Office to schedule an appointment. The deadline to enroll has been set at September 30, 2008. Preliminary information regarding the program are as follows:

- FAV (Fruit and Vegetable) provisions remain the same as in the previous farm programs.
- Direct Payment acres for 2008 remain the same as in the previous farm program at 85% of the base acres established. 2009 through 2011 percentages will be reduced to 83.3% with 2012 percentage returning to 85%.
- Payment yields remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Commodities eligible for payments remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Payment rates remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Payment limitation provisions remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Target prices for 2008/2009 are the same, however those prices change beginning in 2010.
- Payment eligibility and sodbuster/swampbuster provisions remain in effect.



FARM BILL
PROVISIONS,
CONTINUED.....

IMPORTANT
CHANGES



• ACRE PROGRAM

The Act authorizes ACRE program payments. 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 the farm.
2. be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities.
3. be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities.

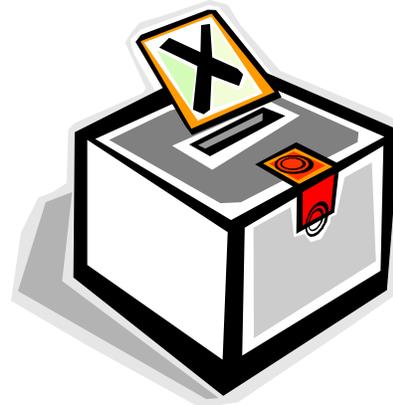
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
REGARDING THE ACRE PROGRAM
WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN FUTURE
NEWSLETTERS.

- Farms where total bases acres are 10.0 acres or less cannot be enrolled into the program unless those farms are owned by a socially disadvantaged or limited resource producer
- SURE PROGRAM

The SURE Program will be available to eligible producers on:

1. Farms in disaster counties, including contiguous counties, which have incurred crop production losses and/or crop quality losses during the crop year.
2. Any farm in the calendar year for which the total loss of production of the farm because of weather is greater than 50 percent of the normal production of the farm.

To qualify for this program, producers must have purchased crop insurance on insurable crops under the Federal Crop Insurance Act, or Purchased a noninsurable policy under the NAP (Non Insured Assistance Program) through the Farm Service Agency.



2008 County Committee
Nominations and Election

The 2008 County Committee election will be held in the following areas:

Genesee County, LAA#2

Townships of: Argentine, Atlas, Fenton, Flint, Grand Blanc and Mundy.

Shiawassee County, LAA#2

Townships of: Caledonia, Hazelton, New Haven, Rush and Venice.

Nominating petitions were mailed to every landowner and/or operator through a statewide newsletter. Petitions are also available at your local FSA Office.

Persons interested in being nominated must complete form FSA-669A and return that form to their local FSA Office no later than August 1st, 2008.

Farm Service Agency is encouraging beginning Farmers to take an active role in the County Committee election process. FSA also requires fair representation of socially disadvantaged groups on the County Committee. If those individuals are not nominated and elected to the County Committee, an advisor is recommended and appointed.



For 2008, producer's who do not meet these requirements may have this provision waived if the producer's pay a fee in an amount applicable to the noninsured crop disaster assistance program fee or catastrophic risk production plan fee by no later than

September 16, 2008



Crop Insurance Policy Monitoring

Farm Service Agency in conjunction with Risk Management Agency monitor insured producer's within each county in an effort to prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program.

Any potential abuse and/or concern will be reported to the Risk Management Agency as well as the growing season inspections required to be completed by Farm Service Agency for the Risk Management Agency.

Reports of abuse can also be reported by individuals to the Farm Service Agency.

CRP Cover Maintenance



Attention Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants: cover maintenance is your responsibility and must be done according to your conservation plan. Mowing for cosmetic purposes or general weed control is not allowed and will result in financial penalties. Mowing maintenance activities may be allowed once per year, only if it's needed to maintain the approved cover, and only on the portion of CRP in need of maintenance. Mowing is permitted between August 1st and August 20th to protect ground nesting wildlife and to allow adequate regrowth for winter cover.

Producers may request permission to perform maintenance activities outside the specified timeframe, but each request has to be approved by the Genesee County Committee on a case-by-case basis. Plan ahead and contact the FSA office prior to conducting any maintenance on your CRP acres.

All 2008 requests to mow will be reviewed by the County Committee. Mowing on an annual basis is not an acceptable method of weed and woody growth control. The County Committee has the right to deny maintenance requests if previous mowing has not adequately solved the problem. Spraying a herbicide may be a viable option, but approval must be requested in writing and granted by the County Committee **BEFORE** you begin the maintenance activity.

SAFE PROGRAM (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)

The SAFE program is considered a continuous CRP program enrollment. A habitat block of a minimum 30 acres in size or a minimum of 200 feet in width and 10 acres in size if enrolling a field border or filter strip. This program allows grassland habitat to be established to enhance certain wildlife species. CONTACT FSA FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

FARM LOAN PROGRAM CHANGES

The new Farm Bill has brought changes to the regulations administering the Farm Loan Programs. We have received information regarding some of the changes but not all of them. Below is a listing of the changes we have received to date:

- The limit or the amount of outstanding Direct Farm Ownership Loans has been increased to \$300,000.00.
- The limit or the amount of outstanding Direct Operating Loans has been increased to \$300,000.00.

The Direct Down Payment Loan:

1. The down payment requirement has been reduced to 5%.
2. The interest rate has been changed to the regular Farm Ownership rate minus 4% or 1.5% whichever is higher.
3. The term of the loan has been extended to 20 years.
4. The maximum loan amount has been changed to 45% of the purchase price or 45% of the appraised value or \$225,000.00 whichever is lower.

FAILED ACREAGE PROVISIONS

A NUMBER OF WEATHER RELATED CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN BOTH COUNTIES. EXCESS RAIN, HIGH WINDS, DROUGHT ARE ALL QUALIFYING DISASTER CONDITIONS WHICH ALLOW PRODUCER'S TO FILE FAILED ACREAGE REPORTS ON CROP(S) DAMAGED AND/OR FAILED. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL TO TIMELY REPORT THOSE LOSSES. PROVISIONS INDICATE THAT LOSSES MUST BE REPORTED WITHIN 15 DAYS OF THE DISASTER OCCURRENCE.



Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program is available to interested producer's who need additional on farm storage or would like to modify existing structures. Basic details of the program are:

- Provide quotes of new structures and/or a cost break down of new equipment.
- Pay a \$45.00 application fee.
- Purchase crop insurance on all insurable crops in the county where the facility is constructed.
- Purchase all peril insurance on the structure listing FSA as the loss payee.
- Complete a title search on the parcel underlying the facility.

Contact FSA for additional details.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Farm Service Agency's, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is still available to all eligible producers and/or landowner's in certain areas in Shiawassee County and the total county in Genesee.

Contact the FSA Office for additional details regarding the program. Cropland eligibility must be determined in advance.

NRCS District, CREP Technician's Bill Kuechenmeister and Donna Flagg are also available to assist regarding conservation planning and seeding requirements.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs 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 incomes derived from any public assistance programs. (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 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).