



U.S. Department of  
Agriculture

Gladwin/Clare  
Co. Office  
1501 N. State St.  
Gladwin, Mi. 48624

(phone) 989-426-9461  
(fax) 989-426-4914

Email:  
dick.rankin@mi.usda.gov

**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**

Ken Brown, Chairman  
Dick Brushaber  
Jim Eberhart  
Mark Iciek  
Randy Sheehan  
Linda Freier, advisor

**Staff**

Jessie Engelhardt  
Brenda Inscho

**Loan Officers**

Betty Garrett

**Loan Manager**

Jerry Spickerman

**County Executive  
Director:**

**Dick Rankin**

Farm Service Agency

# FSA UPDATES

January 2008

Happy New Year!

## New Committee Member Elected

Congratulations to Jim Eberhart and Ken Brown! Jim was elected to represent farmers from Arthur, Surrey, Grant and Sherman townships and Ken was re-elected representing Winterfield, Summerfield, Frost, Franklin, Redding, Greenwood, Hayes, Hamilton, Freeman, Linclon, Hatton, and Garfield townships on the County Committee. This is Jim's first term and Ken's 2<sup>nd</sup> term as a County Committee member.

Thanks again to Albert Wentworth who completed his maximum allowed, three consecutive terms on the county committee. This was also Albert's 35<sup>th</sup> year of service to producers in Clare and then the Clare/Gladwin county committee.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The County Committee system works only because of your participation.

The Committee members held their organizational meeting January 9<sup>th</sup> and voted Ken Brown as chairman and Dick Brushaber as Vice-Chairman for the coming year.

## NO FARM BILL- NO SIGN-UP YET

There will likely be some kind of farm bill signed sometime in the not too distant future and at that time we will notify all those of you potentially eligible to participate of whatever program provisions are announced and sign up start and end dates.

## CROP DISASTER PROGRAM and LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM

It has just recently been announced that 2007 crop losses and pasture losses would be included in the current Crop Disaster Program (CDP) and Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). Under the CDP you will receive a disaster payment on whichever year you had the largest crop loss either 05, 06 or 07. Eligible grazing losses for 2007 in Gladwin and either 05 or 07 in Clare are covered. NOTE: A NEW PROVISION OF THE DISASTER PROGRAM IS THAT ONLY THOSE PRODUCERS WHO HAD A CROP INSURANCE POLICY OR A NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) WILL BE ELIGIBLE. No deadline to sign up has been announced yet.

## Foreign Buyers 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% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## **Power of Attorney**

If you're too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here's a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usdda.gov>. Forms that are obtained and completed outside USDA Service Centers offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.

## **Payment Limitation/Eligibility**

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitation once completed are reviewed on an annual basis. It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation which may affect payment eligibility and payment limitation. The following payments apply to DCP for each contract year under the current Farm bill through both direct and counter-cyclical payments. For all covered commodities: \$40,000 for direct payments and \$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has a \$450,000 payment limitation total for fiscal years 2002 – 2007. The Conservation Reserve Programs annual limit is \$50,000 per person. Entities such as corporations, limited partnerships, trusts and estates are required to provide names, addresses, and ID numbers of their members.

## **Bank Account Changes?**

As of January 1, 1999, all FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers.

## **Attention Producers, Landowners!**

- Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas?
- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
- Is there a wet spot in a field that you want drain to make cropping easier?
- Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
- Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?

These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any question or concern that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative before you begin work.

## **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 county FSA office directly or by phone

## **Spousal Signatures**

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. The exception to this is loans. Husbands and wives may not sign loan documents for each other.

## **Complaint Process**

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have four choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, appeal to State Committee and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division (NAD).

## **Civil Rights Complaint Process**

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint with 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

## **Applications for FSA Farm Loan Assistance**

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.

## **Controlled Substance**

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium poppies and other drug producing plants.

## **Change in Farming Operations?**

Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to notify the office of a change in operations on a farm so records can be kept current and accurate.

## **Guaranteed Loan Limits Have Increased**



Effective October 1, 2007, FSA's guaranteed loan limits increased. Limits include new guaranteed loan(s) plus any outstanding direct or guaranteed principal balances, as indicated, owed by anyone who will sign the promissory note.

The total outstanding:

- combined guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loan (OL) principal balance cannot exceed \$949,000;
- direct and guaranteed FO principal balance cannot exceed \$949,000;
- direct and guaranteed OL principal balance cannot exceed \$949,000; and
- direct and guaranteed FO and OL and emergency loan principal balance cannot exceed \$1,649,000.

<b>Selected Interest Rates for January</b>	
Farm Operating - Direct	4.375
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.125
Limited Resource - Farm Operating	5.00
Limited Resource - Farm Ownership	5.00
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.00
Emergency	3.75
Farm Storage Facility	4.50
Commodity Loans 1996- Present	6.00

Gladwin/Clare Co. Office  
1501 N. State St.  
Gladwin, Mi. 48624



**PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Lansing, Mi  
PERMIT #19**

---

---

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.

---

---

**Now Open For  
Fun and Games**



[www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids)

**Remember you can see this edition of the FSA  
Updates on line at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mi/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi/)**