

THE

# NORTHWESTERLY

Serving Farmers in the Grand Traverse Bay Area

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ISSUE 2

## USDA SERVICE CENTER

GRAND TRAVERSE AREA  
1501 CASS ST, SUITE A  
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684  
231-941-0951 x 2  
231-929-7890 (FAX)

### Hours

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

### Office & Field Staff

Greg Shy, CED  
Julie Jimkoski  
Jan Malik  
Mary Coleman

### Farm Loan Staff

Jim Monroe, FLM  
John Neff

### County Committee

Brent Wagner, Chairman  
Gregory Send, V. Chairman  
Chris Garthe, Member  
Dennis Iott, Member  
David Noonan, Member  
Joanne Gallagher, Advisor



## County Committee Election and Nominations

The County Committee (COC) is made up of 5 members who represent farmers from 5 Local Administrative areas or LAA's. Each member serves a three year term and is eligible to serve three consecutive terms. Due to the odd number of LAA's, either one or two members are elected to serve.

This year COC elections will be held for LAA#1 (Bingham, Leelanau, Leland, and Suttons Bay), and LAA#4 (Blair, Fife Lake, Grant, Green Lake, Paradise, and Union). Chris Garthe is the current COC member for LAA#1 and LAA#4 is represented by Brent Wagner.

All eligible voters are urged to consider seeking nominations for this important position. All agricultural producers and owners of agricultural land are eligible to vote. A farmer's spouse who is listed on the deed is also eligible to vote. Minority and female farmers are encouraged to take part in this important nomination process. County Committee meetings are held at 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the FSA office. A nominating petition was sent with the June newsletter and can be obtained from the web-site below or by request to the FSA office. This petition must be signed by the nominee and returned to the FSA office by August 1, 2008. Additional information on the County Committee election can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections>.

Committee members are a critical component of the day to day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on the committee help decide the kind of programs their counties offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of the local producers. Committees make decisions on:

- Commodity loans and payments
- Establishment of yields
- Conservation programs
- Farm disaster assistance

**If you have not received a ballot, and you are an eligible voter please contact the FSA office so that one is made available to you.**

### Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Policy holders are reminded that they must submit a "*Notice of Loss*" (FSA-576) within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop might be light due to the frosts or hail that we had this spring, contact the office so that we have the opportunity to take a look at your crop. For those of you that have filed a notice of loss, you need to keep us informed of your harvest decisions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of a block, an appraisal will need to be completed on that block. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Remember we need to know the amount of crop sold from previous years in order to establish your actual production history (APH). Your APH is used to calculate your loss payment. This production evidence must be supplied to the COF by July 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **2005-2007 DISASTER PROGRAMS**

Applications are still being accepted for the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). A deadline has not yet been announced.

The Crop Disaster Program (CDP) provides benefits to farmers who suffered a 35% quantity and/or 25% quality losses to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. **The FSA office is now accepting applications for QUALITY LOSSES in addition to quantity losses.** Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 will receive payment for the one year in which the benefit is the highest. ***Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.***

If you are interested in applying under the quality portion of CDP you must bring in verifiable documentation to show loss of quality and reduction in price. You also have the option to provide copies of market contracts which may show a higher price than the CDP established price.

In determining production, participants must supply verifiable and reliable production records to substantiate production to the FSA county committee. FSA uses RMA (crop insurance) loss records for insured crops where available and determined to be accurate. FSA includes all harvested production, non-harvested appraised production, and assigned production from the total planted acreage of the crop unit to determine production under CDP. The maximum CDP benefits a person may receive is \$80,000. CDP requires a 35 percent loss of expected production; therefore, you may be eligible for a payment even if it was determined that the loss was not great enough under your NAP or RMA coverage.

## **CROP REPORTING (CERTIFICATION)**

The crop reporting deadline has been extended until August 15, 2008; however in no case can a crop be reported later than 15 days before the onset of harvest.

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses is necessary in order to receive 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 (DCP). Filing a crop acreage report enables eligible producers to receive Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) on crops for which the crop price has fallen below the loan rate less transportation costs. Producers who have enrolled cropland in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) must certify these acres in order to receive their rental payments. All acreage insured under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must be reported in order to make a loss claim for the insured crop. When Disaster Assistance Programs (CDP) are authorized by Congress accurate acreage reports are also required.

Crop reporting is a free service provided by FSA. This is a great opportunity for you to not only remain eligible to

receive some of the benefits outlined above but to use this crop certification as a record keeping system for your farming operation. **Please call the office for an appointment to complete your crop report.**



## **2008/2012 FARM BILL**

The long awaited farm bill was enacted on May 22, 2008. The Act provides for continuing the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) for 2008 through 2012. The program for 2008 will be very similar to the program in 2002-2007; however, expect changes in 2009-2012. Sign-up began June 25 and ends September 30, 2008; The advance Direct payment is 22%. The one change for 2008 is that a farm having a total of 10 base acres or less will not receive DCP payments unless the farm is owned by socially disadvantaged or a limited resource farmer. Please contact Julie at the FSA office for an appointment to enroll your farms in the DCP.

Reminder: You must have a signed rental agreement or the landowner's signature on the DCP contract. All farmers who produce a crop on the base acres are entitled to share in the DCP payment. Landowners who do not have a risk in growing the crop are not eligible to receive a DCP payment. You must annually report the use of the farm's cropland acreage, comply with conservation and wetland provisions on all your land, protect all base acres from erosion, and control weeds.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) will be available to eligible producers on farms in disaster counties, including contiguous counties that have incurred crop production losses and/or crop quality losses on any farm in which during the calendar year, the total loss of production on the farm because of weather is greater than 50 percent of the normal production of the farm.

Livestock Forage Assistance Program (LFP) will be available to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for eligible livestock because of drought on land that is either native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or planted to a crop specifically for providing grazing.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) will be available to eligible livestock producers on farms that have incurred livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality because of adverse weather.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) will provide emergency relief to producers of livestock (including horses), honey bees, and fish because of losses from adverse weather or other related conditions.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) will provide assistance to producers who lost trees in excess of 15 percent mortality (adjusted for normal mortality).

Producers interested in the SURE, LFP, ELAP or TAP programs must have purchased or obtained a plan of insurance covered under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIC) or if the commodity is non-insurable, be covered under the non-insured crop disaster assistance (NAP) program through FSA and have paid the applicable administrative fee before the deadline date. **However for 2008, producers who do not meet the above listed requirements may be eligible if the producer pays a fee comparable to the cost of NAP or FCIC coverage by no later than September 16, 2008.**

For more information about these programs, contact the FSA office at (231) 941-0951.

## **Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)**

Owners and operators of cropland in Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Kalkaska counties may enroll eligible land in a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice called SAFE which creates a native pollinator habitat planting that consists of native shrubs, grasses and/or wildflowers providing cover, nectar, and pollen for native pollinators.

The sign-up for SAFE is underway and will continue until 2,500 acres are enrolled in the target area. Through continuous CRP USDA accepts offers by producers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements.

Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in CRP contracts for a 10-15 year period. In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

### ***Eligibility Requirements***

To be eligible land must meet basic CRP eligibility requirements. Eligible land is cropland that was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four of the six years from 1996 to 2001 or be part of a working orchard. The land must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

### ***Required Management Practices***

Through SAFE, producers create habitat that is beneficial to the target high-priority wildlife species. This may involve planting grasses, forbs, shrubs or other species that help restore or improve wildlife habitat. CCC requires that

practices under SAFE be managed during the life of the contract. The management requirements are tailored to the individual practice. Fishing and hunting are allowed on CRP-enrolled land, including SAFE. As with other conservation practices and programs under CRP, certain restrictions apply.

### ***Rental & Incentive Payments***

Rental rates are based on the average value of cash rented dryland adjusted to reflect the relative productivity of the particular soil type. The individual soil rentals are available at the local FSA service center. While acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process, producers may elect to receive an amount less than the maximum payment rate. In addition to the payments described above, CCC will pay up to 90 percent of the eligible cost of establishing the native pollinator habitat.

USDA will also provide an up-front, one-time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (CRP-SIP) of \$100 per acre, which is made after the contract is approved.

## **Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants**

The Farm Service Agency can make direct and guaranteed loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds for these loans are reserved each year.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. Socially disadvantaged groups include women, African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asian Americans.

Direct loans may be made to applicants by FSA for both farm operating and farm ownership loans. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to federal or state supervision (e.g., banks and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. FSA typically guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.

Persons who are primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations may apply. Socially disadvantaged loan applicants *do not* receive automatic approval. Individual applicants under this program must meet *all* requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance.

## **New Employees Join USDA Team**

Jason Kimbrough is the new Traverse City NRCS District Conservationist, covering Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties. Jason comes to us from the St. Johns Michigan NRCS office where he worked with row crop, dairy and hog operations. Soil Conservationist Hani Nguyen is from Minnesota has been with NRCS for 3 years and previously worked in Iowa. Please contact Jason or Hani with questions regarding Farm Bill Conservation Programs. We welcome them to Traverse City.



**GRAND TRAVERSE AREA  
FARM SERVICE AGENCY  
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## **Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL)**

With the volatility of commodity prices having the ability to store your grain, instead of selling directly out of the field, offers you many more options in marketing your crops. Loans to erect new storage facilities are available at the attractive interest rate of 3.625% during the month of July. These loans require a 15 percent down payment and are for a term of seven years.



### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

<b>July 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>CRP SAFE signup begins</b>
<b>July 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Last day to certify cherry acreage and submit production evidence for NAP</b>
<b>August 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Last day to submit COC nominating petitions</b>
<b>August 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Crop certification ends</b>
<b>September 16</b>	<b>Final date to apply for SURE buy-in waiver</b>
<b>Sept. 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Final date to purchase hay or pasture insurance</b>
<b>September 30th</b>	<b>DCP signup ends</b>



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