



Issue # 2008-2

July 2008

## IONIA County Newsletter

### **Ionian County FSA**

431 Swartz Ct., Ste 300  
Ionia, MI 48846-2157  
616-527-2098 (phone)  
616-527-9055 (fax)

### **Hours**

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

### **Farm Program Staff**

Linda Kline - CED  
Sandra Meyers  
Bill Brandt  
Lindy Lindberg  
Diana Spitzley

### **Field Reporters**

Ken Carr  
Brian Pinkston

### **Farm Loan Staff**

John Anton, FLM  
Sara Possehn, FLO  
Vicki Carr  
Kathryn Marshall

### **County Committee**

Steven Buche  
Jeffery Sandborn  
Ronald Brownell  
Mary Seidelman, Advisor

### **Websites**

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

### **Websites for kids**

[www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids)  
[www.fs4jk.org](http://www.fs4jk.org)

## **FARM BILL NEWS**

from Linda Kline, County Executive Director

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, better known as the Farm Bill, was placed into law on May 22, 2008. **Most programs will stay the same for 2008.**

There are many changes that will go into effect starting with the 2009 Fiscal Year. Federal Regulations and program policies and procedures will be drafted and developed over the next several months. At this time we have been informed that the following programs will have changes in procedure:

### **Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) - Notice DCP-187**

- DCP will continue for 2008-2012
- The 2008 Farm Bill provides that producers on farms with DCP base acres that total 10.0 acres or less will not receive a direct, counter-cyclical, or average crop revenue election program payment, unless the farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged or a limited resource farmer or rancher. **Call for an appointment.**
- A new program, Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) will be in effect for 2009-12

### **Payment Limitation and Payment Eligibility – Notice PL-173**

- For 2008 programs, all current rules and procedures are applicable
- In 2009 average Adjusted Gross Income, AGI limits have changed. Restrictions are as follows:
  - Non Farm AGI greater than \$500,000 – no eligibility for price support or DCP
  - Farm AGI greater than \$750,000 – no eligibility for direct payments for DCP
  - If AGI is greater than \$1 million - no eligibility for conservation programs unless 66.66% if derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations
  - Non Farm AGI greater than \$1 million- no eligibility for conservation program benefits
- Payment Limitation Controls will be established in 2009 which will credit individuals and entities with both the amount of payments they receive directly and also the amount they are considered to have received indirectly by holding an interest in an entity receiving payment.

### **Disaster – Notice DAP-283**

- 5 new disaster assistance programs will be established
- At a minimum, to be eligible for the program that covers crop production (SURE), the producer must have purchased or be enrolling in the following:
  - For each insurable crop on the farm a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act
  - For each non-insurable commodity on the farm, enrolled and paid for the Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP).
  - **For 2008, producers who do not meet this requirement may have this provision waived if the producers pay a fee in an amount applicable to the NAP fee or Catastrophic Risk Protection Plan fee by no later than August 20, 2008**

As we learn more about the new programs we will keep you informed through newsletters, press releases and some public informational meetings. This newsletter reflects the current interpretation of policies and procedures as of 6-30-08.

## Farm Loans Available

FSA offers farm loans for operations that are unable to obtain commercial financing. The loans available include farm ownership loans, operating loans and youth loans. All loans have a fixed interest rate.

Farm ownership loans are available to purchase (not refinance) land. The maximum loan amount is \$300,000 with terms up to 40 years.

Operating loans can be either annual operating or term operating loans. Some examples of uses for annual operating loans include, crop inputs and feed. These have a maximum term of 18 months. Term operating loans can be used for purchasing machinery, equipment and livestock with a maximum term of 7 years. A total of \$300,000 is available for operating loans.

Youth loans are available to youth between the ages of 10 and 20. These loans are available to FFA, 4-H or other such organized agricultural participants. These loans can be used to purchase livestock, equipment, supplies, tools or operating expenses for the project. The loan cannot exceed \$5,000. Repayment of the loan is individually tailored to the specific project

For more information please contact Sara Possehn at the Ionia Farm Service Agency (616) 527-2098.

### Preventing Fraud, Waste

The Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency are partners in preventing 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 local FSA county office staff, RMA or the Office of the Inspector General.

## CROP REPORTING

Every year all cropland on farms must be reported in order to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL), and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP). Timely and accurate reporting of all crops and land uses, including failed, replanted, and prevented planting acres, can prevent a loss of benefits for many of the programs administered by Farm Service Agency.

The FSA-578, Report of Commodities, must account for all cropland acres on a farm even if the land is idle. Producers should call the office for an appointment to certify their crops.

**2008 Reporting deadlines for everything except NAP crops is:**

**August 15, 2008**

**Prevented Planting:** Prevented planting needs to be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

**Failed Acreage:** Report any failed acreage must be filed before any disposition of the crop.



**IF YOU HAVEN'T REPORTED  
YOUR CROPS,  
PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE.**

**616-527-2098**

## What is Mid-Contract Management of CRP?

Mid-Contract Management of CRP are activities that must be performed on certain practices to ensure the original plant diversity, wildlife benefits, and protections of the soil and water resources are present for the life of the contract. For CRP practices with grasses, legumes, & wildflowers, research has shown that typically 5-6 years after establishment the site becomes dominated by a thick growth of the grasses. To ensure wildlife habitat benefits in these sites, management is required to encourage legumes and wildflowers, and to ensure the grass is not too thick to limit small wildlife species from traveling through the cover to meet their needs. This is your responsibility and must be followed according to your conservation plan.

If a variance is needed for the above stated policy, please contact the office. Variances can be pre-approved on a case-by-case basis.

## NEW MAPS

### **County Office Maps Have a New Look – Geographical Information System (GIS) Project**

New computer generated maps will be mailed to each owner and operator on a farm along with a letter which explains the new mapping system. All maps will be mailed by July 31, 2008. You will no longer be able to see all the land in an entire section of a township. The maps are printed by tract. The software adjusts the size of the tract to fit the paper. At the bottom of each map is a legend which contains data about the map. You should contact our office with any questions on Wetland or HEL labels.

### **What Are You Verifying**

When you receive the maps, please review them to make sure the field boundaries and data are correct. If you have sold property, acquired new farmland, taken ground out of production for houses/buildings or no longer farm an area please make sure that the maps correctly show the changes.

The number of acres shown in each field is probably different than the ones on the old maps due to more sophisticated mapping and measuring tools. The actual number of acres in a field cannot be disputed, but they can be used as a tool to help you identify possible boundary errors. At this time, we want to ensure field boundaries and data are correct. Please keep in mind that with over 4000 tracts, there is always the potential for human error. If you notice that a land determination was not transferred (such as Wetland or HEL determination) to the new map, please contact the office.

### **Correcting Field Boundaries**

The next step is correcting field boundaries and data. You will need to visit the office within 30 days of receiving the maps if you believe the data is incorrect. We are asking that you bring the map back to the office with the proper documentation as described in the letter. We will make a copy of your map and note any boundary discrepancies. Map corrections will be made at a later date.

### **When Will the New Maps Become Effective?**

The new maps and adjusted acres will be used for the 2009 Farm Programs. **Map changes will not affect 2008 programs or crop certification.** Both CRP contracts and farm base acres could be affected by the updated map acres and adjustments may have to be made in 2009. **This will not affect the CRP and DCP payments scheduled to be made in 2008.**

Look for the maps in your mailbox in July!



### **Signature Authority Requirement**

County Offices are required to verify that valid signature authority is on file in the county office before accepting a signature on any program or related documents on behalf of another.

Producers can present evidence of signature authority by bringing in the original document, such as a corporate charter, bylaws, court orders of appointment, trust agreement, last will and testament, or articles of partnership.

The FSA-211, Power of Attorney form can be also completed to grant signature authority to another individual or entity. Please contact the county office if you have any questions.

### **PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY AND PAYMENT LIMITATIONS**

For 2008 programs, all current rules, regulations, and procedures are applicable. See page one for changes that are scheduled for 2009.

USDA payments and benefits are subject to payment eligibility rules such as "actively engaged in farming" requirements; cash-rent tenant rule; permitted entity restriction; average adjusted gross income limitation and payment limitation provisions.

Although annual filing is not required, documents used to determine eligibility are reviewed annually. It is each participant's responsibility to timely notify the County Office by filing revised farm operating plans and/or supporting documentation. Failure to do so may adversely affect eligibility and payments.

These changes may include renting a new farm, giving up a farm, buying or selling land, or other changes. In addition, entities such as corporations, limited liability companies, trusts and estates are required to provide names, address, and ID number of members, and notify FSA whenever member interests change.

**IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION!**

The Farm Service Agency has determined that new computer generated maps are to be distributed to all owners and operators. This is the top priority for Michigan FSA. This must be completed by July 31, 2008. **See page 3 for more information on the maps.**

If you have not certified your crops, you must do so by August 15, 2008. The usual deadline has been extended. **Please call 616-527-2098 to schedule an appointment.**

The DCP program is now available due to passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. (See Page 1 for more information) **Please call 616-527-2098 to schedule an appointment.**

***\*\*\*Many cash rental statements have expired in 2007. In order to make the sign up process quicker and easier, it is suggested that you acquire new cash rentals for the 2008 through 2012 DCP Program.***

**Nominations for a County Committee Member from LAA 3 will be accepted until August 1, 2008. LAA#3 consists of Lyons, Orange, Portland, Sebewa, and Danby Townships. Please call the office for more information!**

<u>2008 COMMODITY LOAN RATES</u>	
CORN.....	\$1.88
SOYBEANS.....	\$4.94
RED WHEAT.....	\$2.24
WHITE WHEAT.....	\$2.12



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