



IONIA County Newsletter

Ionian County FSA

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Ionian, 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

County Committee meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 a.m. The public is welcome to attend regular session meetings.

Websites

www.fsa.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi
www.usda.gov

Websites for kids

www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids
www.fs4jk.org

New County Executive Director for Ionian County

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Linda Kline and I was hired as the new County Executive Director (CED) for Ionian County. I replaced Betty Arp who retired in early January 2008.

I was hired as a Program Technician for FSA in Hillsdale County in 2005. After a year's employment, I entered a training program to prepare me for the job of CED. I worked in the Ionian Office for 2 1/2 months last year as part of my training.

I was thrilled when the Committee conducted interviews and then chose me. I was fortunate to be able to work with Betty Arp during her last days at work before retirement. It made the transition much easier. I also feel fortunate to have had prior work experience with the great staff. All have been kind and welcoming as I have settled into my new job.

On a personal note, my husband Mark and I have 5 children. Our youngest daughter will graduate from high school this year, one daughter is a hall director in Flint, two sons are in the Army, and my middle daughter just married a Marine and moved to California. We owned and operated a dairy farm in Hillsdale County for 30 years.

I am currently renting an apartment in Ionian and returning to Hillsdale on the weekends. I plan on attending local agricultural meetings in Ionian and hope that you will keep me informed of meeting dates and times. I look forward to meeting the producers in the area. I hope you will stop in and say hello!

Committee Election Results

We'd like to congratulate Steve Buche for being re-elected to the County Office Committee (COC), representing producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) #2.

Steve Buche - Elected to the COC
Steve Roth - 1st Alternate to COC

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

Voters in LAA 3 will be voting for a committee member in 2008. LAA#3 consists of Lyons, Orange, Portland, Sebewa, and Danby Townships.

BEWARE OF CROP INSURANCE REBATING SCHEMES

With the spring sales closing date for many Federal crop insurance policies right around the corner, crop insurance agents have been marketing their products aggressively. Producers report that some agents have approached them with promises of lower insurance premiums, refunds, or dividends. **Most of these schemes are not legal.**

The Risk Management Agency and state insurance regulators have stepped up their efforts to uncover illegal rebating. **Those producers who are found to participate in these schemes will not only lose their crop insurance coverage but may also become ineligible for other government programs.**

Producers can report suspicions of illegal rebating to the OIG Hotline: 1-800-424-9121



**Open House
Wednesday, April 2
10:00 to Noon**

**Stop in and meet Linda Kline, the new CED.
We will have cookies and coffee for all!**

LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM LCP

Sign up continues for the LCP. **If you are an eligible livestock producer who suffered feed losses or incurred additional feed costs directly resulting from natural disasters occurring between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2007, you may be eligible for this program.**

Livestock producers applying for LCP must submit a completed application along with an inventory of the number of livestock owned or cash-leased on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period.

If they are applying because of additional incurred feed costs, producers will need to provide the county office original receipts for the feed purchased in the year immediately preceding the disaster year and for feed purchased during the disaster.

If a producer is applying because of pasture loss, they will need to certify to the percent of loss.

More information can be found online at:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lcp08.pdf
For additional details, contact the county office.



CROP DISASTER PROGRAM NOW INCLUDES THE 2007 CROP YEAR

The Farm Service Agency, Crop Disaster Program, was instituted late last year. Changes to the program have since then been announced. Producers who suffered crop losses due to damaging weather or other related conditions for crop years 2005, 2006 and the **entire crop year of 2007** on crops insured through RMA or NAP coverage are now eligible. Losses must be in excess of 35% for quantity and/or 25% for quality losses. For additional details, contact the county office.

DDAP-III

A revised program called Dairy Disaster Assistance Program III (DDAP-III) has been approved. To qualify producers must have had a loss in production from the dairy operations in 2005, 2006 or 2007 due to a declared natural disaster. The base years for milk production and herd size are 2003 and 2004.

Producers must provide the office with the average number of cows in the herd (this includes the dry cows) for the base years and the years for which you are applying. We will also need the total milk production for those years. A statement authorizing your milk handler (cooperative) to send this information directly to our office is available. **Applications must be received by May 5, 2008**



2007-CROP COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Marketing Assistance Loans provide producers with interim financing on commodities between time of harvest and time of sale. This allows producers to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

Applications for loans on 2007 Corn and Soybeans that are stored on the farm or in a warehouse will be accepted until May 31, 2008. The interest rate for loans approved in March is 3.125 %. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. Loans approved in March mature December 31, 2008.

Attention Producers, Landowners!

- Is there a wet spot in a field that you want to drain to make cropping easier?
- 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?
- Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
- Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?

In order to remain eligible for USDA benefits, these questions need to be considered each year by producers. Producers must comply with Highly Erodible and Wetlands provisions. If you plan to do any of the items listed above, **including tiling any ground or removing woods and fencerows, please contact the Ionia County NRCS office before you begin work.** This will help ensure that you remain eligible to receive payments from USDA.

Foreign Landowners Reporting Requirement

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.



Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA offers storage facility loans for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, soybeans, and corn. The interest rate for March 2008 is 3.125%.

The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Scales, portable dryers, used bins, and used equipment are not eligible for financing.

All farm storage facility loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. A lien on real estate is required for loans that exceed \$50,000 or where a borrower's aggregate outstanding loan balance exceeds \$50,000. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment of 15 percent is also required. For details, contact the county office.



State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement SAFE

Starting July 1, 2008 owners and operators of certain cropland in Ionia County may enroll eligible land in a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) conservation practice titled State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), also known as CP38.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct sign-up for SAFE on a continuous (ongoing) basis. Through continuous CRP sign-up, USDA accepts offers by producers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Producers can offer land for enrollment in SAFE and other CRP programs at their local FSA service center.

Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in CRP contracts for 10-15 years (the contract length depends on the SAFE proposal authorized for the area). In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

Details on this program are still being finalized. Additional information will be provided in newsletters and press releases.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES

A husband and wife can sign on behalf of each other for most FSA programs in which either has an interest. However, this does not include loan documents. ***A Power of Attorney form must be on file in order to sign loan documents on behalf of your spouse.*** Contact the office for more information.

FARM BILL NEWS

President Bush has signed a bill submitted by Congress that extends current farm programs until April 18, 2008. This means that the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program has **NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED** at this time. The Farm Service Agency is not able to accept sign ups under this legislation.

An announcement by the president states: "If a final agreement is not reached by April 18, I call on Congress to extend current law for at least one year."

We will keep you informed of any updates through newsletters, radio announcements, and mailings.

Now taking orders for:

2008 Tree Sale

We have wildflowers, tree seedlings, and food plot seed. Pickup dates are April 18&19, 2008 at the Ionia Fair Grounds.

Contact Melissa Eldridge
Ionia Conservation District
(616) 527-2620

Orders can also be made on line at
www.ioniacd.org

Email: melissa.eldridge@mi.nacdnet.net

Appointments Recommended



In order to provide better service to producers, we are asking that you call for an appointment when signing up for programs, requesting loans, and certifying acreage. This will allow us to make sure that we have the necessary records and forms ready for you and save you time while in the office. **Thank you for your cooperation!**

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, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.