



August 2008

Kent/Newaygo/Muskegon Counties' News

**USDA Service Center
Kent County FSA**
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Websites
www.fsa.usda.gov
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Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee
Kent**
David Dunaven
Deb Kober
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NEWAYGO/MUSKEGON
David Bayne
George Cousineau
John Vandenbrink
James Dunn
Craig Zeerip
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2008 Annual Direct Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Information.

Sign up for the 2008 DCP began and will run through September 30, 2008

The 2008 Farm Bill provides a continuation of the DCP program for 2008. The base acres that were in effect in 2007 will be in effect for 2008 and payments will be computed on 85% of the base acres. The Direct payment rates are:

- Corn - \$.28/bu.
- Soybeans - \$.44/bu
- Wheat - \$.52/bu

One change is that the new Farm Bill prohibits direct payments to farms if the base acres are 10 acres or less, unless the farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged farmer or limited resource farmer.

All contracts must be signed by September 30, 2008. Please call to make an appointment.

Prior to sign-up:

- Report any farm changes - report any farming operation changes so that we can keep your record current. This includes changes in landownership or operators.
- If the land in your operation hasn't changed, do you have a signed lease from the landowner?
- A signed rental agreement or the landowner's signature on the DCP Contract is required.
- All farmers who produce a crop on the base acres are entitled to share in the DCP payment. Landowners who do not have an interest in the crop are not eligible to receive a DCP payment.

- Plan to update your payment limitation documents and other program eligibility records if you haven't.
- Reconstitutions – changes that require farm reconstitutions should be reported as soon as possible so we can update your records. Farm divisions should be considered when you do not have a firm lease. We cannot enroll a farm with changes pending, so please let us know of your changes well before your appointment to sign up. Recons must be requested by August 1, 2008.

Payment Limitation and Payment Eligibility

- 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.



Appointments Recommended

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office



Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs for 2008

ALL PLEASE TAKE NOTE!!! The 2008 Farm Bill appropriated for Supplemental Disaster Programs

- SURE – Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

For producers to be eligible they must purchase at least the CAT level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for non-insurable crops on **all crops in all counties**. Sales closing dates have passed for 2008. However, farmers may obtain a waiver for 2008 only; by paying an administrative fee of \$100 per crop not to exceed \$300 for the county or \$900 total for all counties. This buy in fee is non-refundable and must be paid no later than **September 16, 2008**.

Contact office for more details. Please note all crops in all counties must be waived or covered to qualify for 2008 assistance.

Thinking of Tiling or Clearing land?

Don't forget the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Provisions. Bringing new land into production by **clearing trees, improving drainage by tiling or dredging are potential violations of the HEL/WC rules**. Before you begin any land conversion project, please come into the county office to file form AD-1026. Natural Resources Conservation Service will make an evaluation of your land to determine how to manage the wet areas of your land most efficiently. Checking ahead of time will help keep you eligible for USDA benefits.

Average Crop Revenue Election(ACRE) Program

The Act authorizes ACRE program payments. Beginning with the 2009 crop year, producers will have the option to participate in a state-level revenue protection program instead of the counter-cyclical program.

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 enrolled farms.
2. be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.
3. be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities on enrolled farms.

If actual state per acre revenue is less than the guarantee and if a producer suffers an actual revenue loss for the crop on the farm, then the producer will receive an ACRE payment equal to the difference between the state per-acre revenue guarantee and the state actual revenue calculation paid on 83.3 percent (85 percent for 2012) of the acres planted to the cover commodity on the farm.

Deadline to Report Crop Acreages Extended to August 15, 2008.

Acreage reporting time is here. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Producers are required to report their planted crops and acres to FSA in order to maintain eligibility for several program benefits:

- Direct Counter-Cyclical Program
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Annual Rental Payments
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Payments

Please call for an appointment and be sure to have plant dates available.



Kent Office

Is looking to hire an intermittent to assist during heavy workload periods and when funding is available. This person would assist the County Office staff and would be used on a call-in basis. Please call the Kent County FSA Service Center if interested or email david.bain@mi.usda.gov.



Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be made by direct deposit unless there is a financial hardship to prevent it. Producers need to notify us when accounts change to prevent a delay in payments.



Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Owners and operators of cropland in Kent, Newaygo and Muskegon 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.

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.

Crop Disaster Program 2005 2007

CDP has been expanded to provide benefits for losses suffered in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Producers must choose only one year to receive benefits. Only producers who purchased crop insurance or Non Insured Assistance Program coverage for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Losses must have exceeded 35%. The payment rate is set at 42% of normal price. Producers who have already received benefits for 2005 or 2006 can file an application for 2007 losses. If losses were greater in 2007 additional benefits will be paid.

The CDP now provides benefits to farmers who suffered *quality* losses (as well as quantity losses) from natural disaster and related conditions to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops. Contact the office for further details.

Note: Only crops covered by an insurance or NAP policy are eligible.

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 15th.

New 2009 NAP rates will increase to \$250.00 per crop, \$750.00 per county, and \$1,875.00 per producer for all counties.



SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact this County Office in person or by phone.

Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmers as a person whom: Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years. Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm. Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA. Does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.

Real Estate for Sale Visit the following web site for government owned farms, houses, lots & buildings.
<http://www.resales.usda.gov>

Dates to Remember	
August 1 st	COC Nomination Petition Deadline
August 15 th	Crop Reporting Ends
Sept. 1st	Office Closed for the observance of Labor Day
Sept 16 th	Final date for 2008 Disaster Assistance Program "buy-in" waiver
Sept. 30 th	DCP Sign-up Ends
**Sept.30 th	Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for Alfalfa, Mixed Forage, Rye and Mint
**Nov. 20	Sales closing date for 2009 apples, apricots, asparagus, blueberries, sweet/tart cherries, cane berries(raspberries), grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, rhubarb, and strawberries
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

** Dates have been extended to Dec .1, 2008

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