



October 2008

Lapeer/Oakland FSA News Brief

Lapeer
USDA Service Center

Lapeer/Oakland
County FSA
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Hours
Monday – Friday
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Website
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2008 Annual Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Information

Sign up for the 2008 DCP began June 25, 2008, 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 total of base acres is 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 land ownership 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 and risk in the crop are not eligible to receive a DCP payment.

- Plan to update your payment limitation documents and other program eligibility records if there have been any changes.
- 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. Any reconstitutions filed after August 1, 2008, will be completed for the 2009 crop year.

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 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.



Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of 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. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, the RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs

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 (including pasture and hay) in all counties.**

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. **CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE**-Highly erodible land (HEL) compliance is still required to earn program benefits. This includes payments under the Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Loan deficiency payments, farm loan program, crop insurance and many other USDA programs. Farms with HEL soils need to be aware of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements spelled out in conservation plans. Contact NRCS at 810-664-0895, ext. 3.



Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

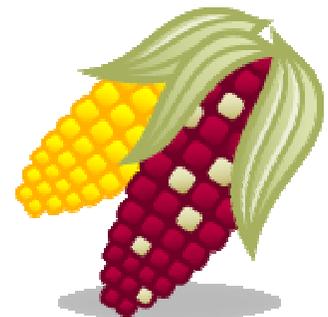
Policy holders are reminded that they must report crop losses within 15 days of the date disaster occurs or the date crop damage becomes apparent by filing a "Notice of Loss" (FSA 576) with FSA office. Crops adversely affected due to weather extremes need to be documented with an in-field inspection and a report of harvest decision. Any portion of the crop plantings not taken to harvest requires an appraisal prior to destruction or abandonment. All NAP policy holders are required to file crop acreage report for all covered crops.

Producers must meet all program requirements in order to take advantage of NAP assistance in the event of a disaster. Specifically policy holders also must request payments by application closing date for the covered crop following the year in which the loss occurred, accurately report the acreage and shares for all crops potentially eligible for NAP certify crop production history, and report current crop year production before required deadline.

Remember, crop yields from previous years need to be submitted in order to establish actual production history (APH).

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

Late application provisions are in place to help accommodate NAP sales closing deadline dates for 2009 crops with 2008 sales closing dates. NAP application closing dates for fall seeded crops, grass, apples, asparagus, cherries, grapes, honey, plums, peaches, strawberries, etc. have been extended to December 1, 2008, for the 2009 crop year coverage. Please contact this office for additional information.



Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holding to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold 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.



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.

New Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Practice

The new practice is called *Diverse Grassland Planting* (CP38E). The practice is available in just 18 counties in Michigan. Eligible Lapeer County landowners can sign up for this practice at any time; it does not require a specific sign-up period.

Diverse grasslands and oak savannas have been declining drastically in Michigan over the past 150 years. In fact, native grasslands such as savannas are now considered one of the most threatened plant communities in Michigan. Grasslands are important to a wide variety of wildlife species, including both game and non-game species. With the support of CRP, financial assistance is now available to landowners who wish to improve the wildlife diversity of their property by restoring these unique habitats. Diverse grasslands of short grass prairies and tall grass prairies provide a variety of wildlife habitat for birds, mammals and insects. Grasslands are important to a variety of wildlife species by providing food and cover such as winter/thermal cover, nesting habitat and protective cover for rearing of that year's young.

Eligibility- Landowners and/or producers who have cropland that is either coming out of an existing CRP contract, or ground planted to cash crops 4 out of 6 years from 2002 to 2007, are eligible. Also, applicants must prove ownership for at least 12 months prior to the application.



Payments available:

- Up to 100% cost share for preparation and establishment of the diverse grasslands.
- A one-time signing bonus of \$100 - \$150 per acre.
- Annual rental payments for enrolled acres (based on 3 predominant soil types)

GIS

As part of a decade long program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. The Farm Service Agency manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment at more than 2,500 field service centers throughout the country.

Transitioning to the GIS environment has made good business sense for FSA for a variety of reasons. For one, CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of current ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). For years, FSA had been using hard copy maps that were 10 years old or more. USDA Service Centers use NAIP in order to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Second, using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. In conjunction with yearly updated high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public.

Are you a GIS user at home? If you are a FSA program participant and would like a fully attributed CLU clip of your property, make arrangements for this product delivery with your local County Office Service Center. For more information about the Common Land Unit and NAIP can be found by visiting online, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.





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 Andrew Calcaterra at (810) 664-0895, by phone or in person.

LOANS AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS, AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and or 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 farmer as a person whom:

Has operated a farm for **NOT** more then 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 average size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Socially disadvantaged groups are Women, Hispanics, American Indians, African Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

September 30	Must have 1 authorized signature on a 2008 DCP Contract
October 13	Office Closed – Columbus Day
October 15	Final date to submit landowner signatures or leases for DCP Program
Oct. 28 - 30	Limited staff due to Farm Bill Training
November 3	Ballots mailed to eligible voters
December 1	Last day to return voted ballots
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
Continues	CRP-SAFE
Continues	Farm Storage/Facility Loan



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of 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.