



# LENAWEE FSA News

## Lenawee County USDA

### Service Center

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**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
Jeffrey Ehlert, Chairperson  
Alan Gould  
Michael Feight

FSA INFO WEBSITE  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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Jim Bills 104  
Connie Rathbun 108  
Debra Shiels 105  
Ann Squires 100  
Barbara Wagner 107  
Beth Wagner 106

Farm Loan Section:  
Michael Jordon  
Farm Loan Manager 110  
Rebecca Deline 111  
Judy Kellie 113  
Susan Lerch 112



### Watch your mail for new maps!

We are in the process of printing and mailing new maps of the farms you own or operate.

*We are making a new set of computer-generated maps for farms containing cropland acres. We have reviewed all field boundary lines on aerial imagery taken in the 1990's and recorded this information in the computer. You will receive updated computer generated maps for the farms you reported to us as currently being farmed. These maps will replace old paper maps used for all FSA business.*

Computer based mapping will help us provide higher quality maps and more accurate acreage determinations. The potential changes to boundary lines and resulting acreage will affect your program participation.

The process of converting to a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based mapping system has taken us years to complete. We need your help to ensure that field boundaries are in the right locations. Please review all of your boundaries for accuracy. If you identify fields that are incorrect on the maps, or you did not get maps for land that your own or operate, please contact the office

within 30 calendar days from the date of your letter. If you have sold property, acquired new farmland, taken ground out of production for buildings, or no longer farm an area, please report this immediately. If we do not hear from you, we will consider the field boundaries as correct and use the information for USDA/FSA program purposes beginning in program year 2009.

### Moving to GIS

Three little letters are having a big effect at the county office and on the farm these days. They stand for Geographic Information System. GIS is a computer-based tool for capturing, storing, mapping and analyzing geographic information.

FSA has adopted GIS to replace the old system of hard copy maps and aerial photographs. It is faster and more accurate than the old system of updating aerial photos by erasing old boundaries and acreages, measuring, and placing new information on the photo with a pen!

Here's how GIS works. We started by having our photographs scanned so the images could be stored in the computer. The photos become the base layer of the GIS. The outline of each field was identified for each individual farm. This created another layer of data called the Common Land Unit (CLU).

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The software stores the shape of the field as a “polygon,” and ties it to a specific location using latitude and longitude. The software also automatically — and very accurately — calculates the size of the field.

Eventually the CLU layer will be connected to a database that contains data about the cropping history for that particular field.

GIS gives us the tools to provide quicker, more accurate information to producers and reduce the amount of time the producer must spend in office to participate in USDA programs.

## DISASTER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

### Dairy Disaster Assistance Program

This program is for milk production losses that were due to disastrous weather events. Signup began on March 5, 2008 and ends Monday May 5, 2008. Producers must have produced and marketed milk in the United States any time during the period of January 2, 2005, through December 30, 2007. Producers must have suffered dairy production losses attributed to a declared natural disaster during the eligible period in an approved area. Lenawee County was covered by a disaster declaration for 2005, 2006 and 2007. If you experienced milk production losses that were due to weather events during the time period above, please call for an appointment to discuss this program.

### Livestock Compensation Program

This program provides assistance to producers who suffered grazing losses or had an increase in feed costs directly resulting from natural disasters occurring from 1/1/05 to 12/31/07. If you had feed production losses on pasture or hay, or you have increased feed costs due specifically to weather events, please call Beth Wagner for an appointment to discuss this program. The payment is the lower of your feed pro-

duction loss or the difference between the disaster year feed cost and the previous year feed cost. Eligible animals are dairy or beef cattle, 500 pounds or more, and other animals that are raised for commercial purposes and breeding. The animals must have been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation on the beginning date of the disaster period. This program is not for wild animals, recreational animals or animals in feed lots. Animals must have been owned or cash-leased on the beginning date of the disaster period. If you incurred additional feed costs due to a disaster event in 2007 for example, and the feed was for use with eligible livestock, this program is for you. The increased costs can be in price or in additional feed you needed to purchase above what you normally purchase. For example, if you normally purchase 500 bales of hay for your eligible animals and in 2007 you needed to purchase 600 or the price was greater, you may qualify for a payment. We will need to know the number and type of livestock you owned on 4/01/07 and where they were located; the number of acres you pastured; your certification of the percent of loss you had on grazed land; the location of the livestock at time you complete the application (you must account for any livestock sold). We will also need to know the additional cost of feed purchased. Compare your feed purchase receipts for 2006 and for 2007. For 2007 include any feed purchases paid for up until April 20, 2008 —the start of our next grazing period. If you can show us the receipts to support an increase, please gather the information above and call for an appointment.

### 2008 Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acres and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

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Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. With the exception of some Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for small grains and the July 15th deadline on all other crops including CRP acreage.

### **HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND REMINDER**

Most Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with “sodbuster and swampbuster” provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land (HEL) planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

**Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to an annual crop.**

**Be sure you are actively applying proper conservation practices on your HEL.**

Plan ahead so your farm help understands that you cannot chisel plow soybean fields; that you need to seed a cover crop soon after silage Harvest, etc.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland **to make possible the planting of a crop** will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in new areas or newly rented fields.

**When you apply for program benefits you certify that you understand that your eligibility for all programs benefits on all farms will be re-**

**voked if you do not comply.**

### **FARM LOAN PROGRAMS**

***FSA provides credit to agricultural producers unable to secure credit from commercial lending sources. Contact Michael Jordon, Farm Loan Manager.***

### **COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE!**

***Call and get details from Ann Squires!***

### **FACILITY LOANS AVAILABLE!**

***Call and get details from Connie Rathbun!***

### **REPORT DIRECT DEPOSIT CHANGES:**

If you change your financial institution or the account in which you would like your payments deposited, please report the change to this office immediately. We don't want your payments delayed by being sent to an account that is no longer valid.

### **CRP SIGNUP**

***USDA has recently indicated there will not be general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2008. The budget for FY 2008 assumes no available funding for CRP general signups.***

***However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will still be eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs will remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.***



Temporary  
Return Service Requested

Western Lake Erie Basin Cooperative Conservation Agreement

On April 3, 2008, USDA, Michigan Department of Agriculture, several conservation districts, and the non-profit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) launched an effort to improve water quality and restore wildlife in southeast Michigan's Western Lake Erie Basin Watershed.



**The effort combines:**

- increased funding to conservation districts for farmer outreach and technical assistance;
- advanced level EQIP practices to improve water quality, like precision nutrient management, winter cover crops and continuous no-till; and
- CREP practices that filter runoff and provide wildlife habitat, such as streamside buffers and wetland restoration.

Financial assistance to landowners will come primarily from Michigan's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Environmental Defense Fund will help provide conservation districts with increased financial assistance to work with farmers to plan for and implement the practices. Please watch for more information in future newsletters.

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